LETTERS FROM GEORGE ELIOT TO ELMA STUART

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1872-1880

EDITED BY

ROLAND STUART

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To

Mother

INTRODUCTION

ELMA STUART was the youngest daughter of William James Fraser of Ladhope by his wife May Anne Cumming of Logie, and was born about 1837.

I have often heard my mother say it was the misfortune of their lives that their father died while she and her brother and sisters were still quite young: from all accounts he was a man of fine character, devoted to his children, and absorbed in their welfare. Soon after her husband's death his widow married again, and the children were allowed to grow up much as they pleased. My mother, who was of an affectionate and loving disposition, was not understood by her parents, and her childhood was far from being a happy one.

In the year 1860 my mother married an officer in the Black Watch, and my father dying shortly after, she was left with a small pittance on which to live and educate her son. Hitherto my mother had had but little happiness in her life, and it will therefore be the more readily understood, when, in later years she met with the tender love and deep understanding sympathy which she found in George Eliot and her writings, how the long pent-up stream of her affection overflowed its banks, carrying all before it to the feet of her "Spiritual Mother."

It was about 1870 that my mother, who then lived in Brittany, fell in with the writings of George Eliot, which made such a deep impression upon her that she determined to make something with her own hands to present to George Eliot as a token of gratitude for the solace and comfort her writings had been to her.

The terrible struggle between France and Prussia was just at its height, and some of the wood-carvers from Paris came to our out-of-the-way corner of Brittany, seeking a

place in which to carry on their art free from molestation. It was their presence at Dinan and the sight of their work which suggested to my mother the idea of taking up that branch of art. She threw herself into the work with such ardour that it was not long before she distanced her masters not only in designs but also in execution—and they, growing jealous of her refused to give her more lessons, and threw annoying difficulties in her way. This only made my mother the more determined to succeed. Accordingly, as soon as the siege of Paris was ended, accompanied by a devoted friend, she made her way thither and took a tiny apartment in the Quartier Montmartre. There she entered an atelier, under one of the best masters, sometimes working as many as sixteen hours a day.

There is no need to recount the many privations endured in Paris—were they not all borne for the sake of making something worthy of George Eliot, and as a convincing proof of her appreciation and gratitude for her writings?

My mother excelled in her art, and it is amazing the amount of work she accomplished in the ten years before a long and terrible illness overtook her. She sent me to the best schools she could afford, the yearly bills being paid by the labour of her clever hands.

Unfortunately, copies only remain of my mother's first two letters to George Eliot; but these, and George Eliot's subsequent letters, explain, how what began as a sense of gratitude on my mother's part, developed into a mutual love such as exists between parent and child, and which was only terminated by death. My mother always treasured these letters as her most sacred possession, and in all her wanderings in search of health they never left her.

Having thus briefly sketched the origin of this friendship, I leave the letters to speak for themselves, only adding an explanatory note here and there where the context seemed to need it.

With regard to the letters themselves I have felt, after much consideration, that I

could not put them to better use than to present them to the Nation, and I do so trusting that they may carry a message of love and hope to other hearts, and that they may prove a source of strength and solace to them, as they did to her to whom they were addressed. The letters are now in the British Museum.

ROLAND STUART.

Rome, *26th April* 1909.

ELMA STUART'S FIRST LETTER TO MRS. LEWES, "GEORGE ELIOT"

Les Buttes, Dinan,
Jany. 1872.

If you please:

Long ago people were allowed the boon of offering a present in thanks for good received.

Surely not less now than in the old days "Gifts are the signs of grateful minds"—

Most kindly then please to accept this poor little bookslide, which I have had the great pleasure to make for you, and which I humbly venture to send you, care of Messrs. Blackwood.

What for years, you have been to me, how you have comforted my sorrows, peopled my loneliness, added to my happiness, and bettered in every way my whole

nature, you can never know: till the Great Day of Squaring accounts comes; and then —there will be so many, so many who will tell the same story: blessing you: that I felt impelled to speak now, when I could be heard.

If you are gracious and kind and will do me this great favour of acceptance, I shall be very proud and happy: tho' anyway I shall always be — Your faithful humble servant,

ELMA STUART.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Feb. 1, 1872.

DEAR MADAM—Very rarely in my life have I had words which touched me with keener pleasure than those you have written to me. The beautiful Book-slide is come and is now holding books on our table. It will continually be a reminder to me of what you have told me—a reminder of the wealth I have in your mind. For there is no wealth now so precious to me (always excepting my husband's love) as the possession of a place in other minds through the writings which are the chief result of my life. It was a very dear and tender thought of yours to work at something which must have occupied you many

days, and to send it me as a visible token of our spiritual companionship. Even if it had been a very common piece of work, I should have cherished it: and it is in fact beautiful for all eyes, even those who can see nothing in it but a bit of admirable carving. My eyes see much more in it—just as they see much more than marble where pious feet and lips have worn a mark of their pressure.—Believe me, dear Madam, yours always gratefully,

M. E. Lewes.

The Priory, 21 North Bank, Regent's Park,
1 *Feb.* 1872.

My dear Madam—If the writings of George Eliot have given you some moments of happiness it will not be indifferent to you to learn that your letter has given both her and her husband a thrill of exquisite pleasure. She has long passed beyond that stage of authorship in which *praise*—public or private—is regarded as the desirable end; and indeed very little praise of the direct

kind ever reaches her, for I rigidly exclude all public criticism from her sight, and when friends or acquaintances are disposed to be complimentary they are turned over to me, who have stomach for any amount of eulogy on her (it can't hurt *me*, you know!).

But while she is at once sceptical of praise and averse to be constantly "chewing the cud" by having her works talked about to her, she is proportionately affected by *sympathy*, and grateful for all acknowledgment of influence such as your letter so sweetly expresses. She will thank you herself, but I also on my part must thank you and ask your acceptance of a little volume compiled by one of her fervid admirers whom we have never seen (those are commonly the most fervid admirers!). It is a volume which I think you will like and which you are not perhaps in the way of coming upon at Dinan.—Believe me, very truly yours,

G. H. LEWES.

Elma Stuart's second Letter to George Eliot a year later.

"Les Buttes," Dinan,
Feby. 1873.

If you please, dearest Mrs. Lewes—(Ah don't be angry, for the night cometh when no man can love.)

"Gifts are still the signs of grateful minds."

I should not feel very much afraid of again venturing to offer you of the labour of my hands, for Mr. Lewes's *Goethe* has said—and your own dear letter bore it out, that "Great genius is eminently conciliatory." If I concede to you that "love does not make things easy" will you let me tell you that it makes them very sweet; for tho' I began your frame in a stuffy little atelier in Paris last summer: I was very happy over it, for my whole soul was in my work,—nay, and my whole heart too, for was it not to lay at your feet?

And tho' it has taken long to do, since I would offer you only of my best, yet I have lingered over it, *loving* to work

for you, and then when at last it was finished, courage failed me to send it.

Some day perhaps you will let me tell you, why maybe even more than to many others: you are the good Angel of my home. I pray your kindly acceptance of my work, offered you in great humility.

Asking leave to shake hands warmly and respectfully with Mr. Lewes, I am always, your faithful, humble, and—please forgive me, most affectionate servant,

ELMA STUART.

I do not exactly know why I enclose the likeness of my dear little son: but I think it must be the same feeling that moved the mothers of old, when "they brought young children unto Him."

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
19*th Feby.* '73.

MY DEAR MRS. STUART—By what sweet instinct was it that you spontaneously repaired Mrs. Lewes's forget, and sent the photo which I had specially asked her to request of you, and which she intended but forgot to mention in her letter? Of course it was nothing but the prompting of that very nature which shines so delightfully through your letters and which makes us *love* you and repudiate the idea of your being a stranger.

Sympathy is one of the great psychological mysteries — and as a psychologist I am bound to explain it, but can't. The very week which brought your letter brought letters from widely distant strangers—from Naples, Switzerland, and Massachusetts. But yours was *my* letter—I mean that which brought the tears into my eyes. One of the letters was from a Swiss admirer who at an advanced age learned English in order thoroughly to read in the original her works,

which had fortified and delighted him in the translation. Having done so he made *Main's Extracts* his Breviary.—Of course this and much else was gratifying both to her and to me.—But the deepest of all gratitude springs from the touched heart not from the pleased intellect.

I wish I could send you a portrait of her. But she has always refused to be photographed. In lieu thereof I send a copy of one she wears in her locket. It was taken some years ago and then was tolerably like. Some day or other I trust we shall see each other—here or at Dinan—and then we shan't know where to begin our outpourings!

And then as to Watch—have you a photo of him also ?—Dogs are my passion and your dog must be a dear beast.

When you write again, let it be soon, tell us more about yourself, as much personal detail as is practicable. . . .

[MS. cut away.]

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Feb. 21, '73.

MY DEAR FRIEND—The beautiful mirror has come quite safely. It is—it will be a lasting delight not only to our eyes but to our hearts also, recalling continually those precious feelings and precious words of yours which will always be among my sources of strength and comfort.

When I came down to breakfast the other day I found my husband's face radiant over your letter (*ex officio* he opens all my letters); and I wish you could have witnessed his emotion in reading it aloud to me—the rising sob which made it almost impossible for him to utter the closing words. Believe me, dear friend whom I know only in the spirit, your labour over the love-inspired task in "the stuffy little atelier in Paris last summer" has not been a labour in vain: it has raised very blessed feelings in two souls. I say two, because I think you will understand that the most exquisite part of my enjoyment in any

tribute that comes to me is the joy it causes my husband.

Always, whatever you are moved to tell me about yourself will have a deep interest for me, whether of your past life or of the present. The photograph of your boy has taken its place among our favourite photographs of children, and the bright little face seems to make a considerable link of knowledge about you.

I have had very bad health for the last year and more, and my life has always been much broken by physical malaise—a fact which gives emphasis to my hope that you are strong in body, and that it is not too largely by dint of mental energy that you get through the lovely wood-carving.

Mr. Lewes cherishes that work and the thought of what it implies with much happy pride, and I, with true thankfulness. —Believe me, in warm response, yours ever affectionately,

M. E. Lewes.

BLACKBROOK, BICKLEY, KENT,
Sep. 17, '73.

MY DEAR MRS. STUART — The lovely shawl is come in safety. I suppose that Wordsworth would have rebuked me for calling a shawl "lovely." But I think the word is allowable in this case, when the exquisite texture seems to my imagination to hold much love in its meshes.

It is really just the sort of garment I delight to wrap myself in — the utmost warmth compatible with the utmost lightness being my ideal of clothing for my feeble body. Thanks, dear Friend, you have made many pretty epochs for me since that epoch of your first letter, when, as Clotilde de Vaux said of her friend, "J'ai eu le bonheur de vous acquérir."

My letters are at this moment stuffed in the little letter-case bearing my name, which lies beside me. I never carry a purse in my pocket, because I never go out by myself, but the dear little red purse always lies in my desk where I see it constantly. And

now I shall often wrap myself in your affection — otherwise called my Shetland shawl. (By the way, the brown border is perfect.)

I confess I tremble a little at the prospect of your seeing me in this flesh. At present I have the charms of a "Yarrow unvisited."

As to the portrait, I am not one bit like it—besides it was taken eight years ago. Imagine a first cousin of the old Dante's —rather smoke-dried—a face with lines in it that seem a map of sorrows. These portraits seen beforehand are detestable introductions, only less disadvantageous than a description given by an ardent friend to one who is neither a friend nor ardent.

But it would be sad if one's books were not the best of one, seeing that they reach farther and last (it is to be hoped) longer than the personality they went out from.

I need say no more now, since we shall soon see you. Only let me thank you once more for all the sweet affection you have manifested towards me, and the valued words you have written me about your

own experience so far as it has drawn your heart towards me. Such things are among my reasons for being glad that I have lived.

Mr. Lewes and I are keeping a warm welcome for you. We have often observed that Solomon's wise admonition is rarely applied except by those who are the least in danger of being wearisome. The real bore, alas, never dreads boring you.—In expectation, yours maternally,

M. E. Lewes.

Early in October 1873 my mother came to London and spent the day with Mr. and Mrs. Lewes at their place at Bickley. As the following letter testifies, the meeting brought them more closely together, and at last my mother found what she had been craving for so long—understanding love, and sympathy. R. S.

Blackbrook, Bickley, Kent,
Oct. 4, '73.

My dear Elma—Here is the shabby little lock of hair. I want also to say that I love you the better for having seen you in the flesh, and shall always (for the brief time that I shall last) be with motherly interest—Your affectionate Friend,

M. E. Lewes.

The Priory, 21 North Bank, Regent's Park,
26 *Nov.* '73.

Dear good Woman!—Your letter with the welcome portraits of my friends Watch and Dora arrived this morning and was followed by the box. I wish you could have seen the delight of Mrs. Lewes and myself on the unexpected appearance of Puss, and our imagination of Blanche's joy when she sees it. The lovely *chancelière* also—only too lovely Mrs. Lewes says—and the photos were duly welcomed, and their donor thanked. Gloves will be worn, and scarf too, with thought of Dinan.

I should have written to you immediately

on our return home the beginning of this month, but that I wanted to wait till I could send you the *Life of Johnson* which Mrs. L.'s unseen adorer has completed on a suggestion of mine, and which you as a worthy reader of Boswell have a right to. But its publication has been delayed. However, it will reach you as soon as it is published.

Let me tell you, because I know it will please you and you ought to know it, that your visit was a great success and that you left behind you a very sweet and lovable image. There was terrible *risk* in the meeting. *I* felt confident; and yet experience warned us both of a great possible disappointment. It is so different *seeing* those whom one has only known through correspondence—or the reports of others. Not that people are *not* the people of their letters, but they are so much *else*, and that sometimes is discrepant with the conception formed of them, and *seems* to falsify it. However, in this case you were just what we thought you were.

The exquisite weather which succeeded your visit helped with the quiet to set us both up, and I hope has fortified us for the coming season. Though return to London has been a return of my headaches, alas! nor is Mrs. Lewes as well as she ought to be.

We were fortunate enough in having a delightful Scotch gardener for our landlord, and he volunteered to annihilate our agreement when he found the house did not suit us—so we have got *that* off our minds and are now looking out for another country house.

Thanks for your offer about books, but I get everything with the greatest ease through the booksellers here.

Although I send you a copy of my new book, just out, you must understand that it is solely for the pleasure of writing your name in it, and that I don't for a moment wish you to read it on that account, unless, which is possible, you may feel any interest in the subjects treated. As I resent being required to read other people's books, how-

ever much I may like the writers, when the subjects do not lie immediately in the paths I am treading, so neither do I willingly inflict on others the reading of mine.

Mrs. Lewes begs me to send her love to you, and to say she will write to you shortly.—Ever yours,

G. H. Lewes.

The Priory, 21 North Bank, Regent's Park,
Nov. 27, '73.

My dear Elma—The wonderful packet came yesterday morning—your sweet letter to me only last night. We are both delighting beforehand in Blanche's delight on her making acquaintance with the unique cat, and my feet have already been enjoying themselves in the unspeakable slipper. The cork and the wealth of soft lining make it quite unlike anything of the kind that I ever tried before, and I believe it will do for me instead of that more unhealthy appliance which you saw me using. Thanks, dear friend. I think you are the only person

who has ever made gifts perfectly charming to me. You have a genius that way. As some people secrete extra bile or spiteful remarks, you secrete beautiful devices of presents. And your letters are all the dearer now that I have seen you and can imagine you saying the things you write.

I shall certainly think of you on Xmas Day, which to us also is the least desirable day of the year. About seven o'clock in the morning, before we get up, I am likely to be speaking of you, and some part of the day my feet will be in the scarlet slippers and the warmth will be continually transforming itself, in a strictly scientific manner, into grateful affection.

How could I fail to think of you much and often? The years are few in which I can still be with my loved ones, and the very perfection of my happiness sometimes presses upon me with an awful sense that it may end in their being taken away from me, instead of my being taken from them.

Give my love to Roland—and Watch

and Dora.[1] We have the likenesses of the whole family now, and I can make a very good picture of you in your daily life—inaccurate in the still life most likely, but not in the three living figures.

We talk of you very often and you go along with all the sweet influences of our days. We should miss you sadly if a cruel sponge came and washed our possession of you away.—Yours maternally and gratefully,

M. E. Lewes.

The Priory, 21 North Bank, Regent's Park,
Mar. 8, '74.

My dear daughter Elma—I must send you a few words, in spite of your considerate prohibition, to say that the pretty little book is arrived with your precious letter, which makes me very grateful—and what feeling is happier than gratitude? since it takes all the good that is given us, as the goodness of others.

You will not surprise me by any stories

[1] Two very favourite dogs of my mother's.

of energy on your part, for you struck me as an incarnation of fun, industry, and lovingness—three best forms of energy. And it is cheering to think that there are blue clocks as well as troubles in the world. There is another spiritual daughter of mine whom I should gladly see eager about some small delight—a china monster or a silver clasp—instead of telling me that nothing delights her. One can never see the condition of the world truly when one is dead to little joys.

I should like to know something else about Mrs. Fitzgerald than that she is rich. But I am uneasy in the sense that at the moment she and her companion appealed to my attention in that pretty way, I was distracted by thoughts of the half-blind lady on my arm, and I fear that I should hardly know Mrs. F. again so as to give the sign of recognition which I owe her.

Mr. Lewes is very well and working briskly. I am better, but (since we sent you any news, I imagine) I have been an invalid with bad attacks of pain, probably

neuralgic. I shall always feel sure that I may write you as short a letter as I like, because you enter into the reasons which make letter-writing a burthen to me.

As to my hands, dear pagan, they are ugly—but you have a vision of your own, oh why should I undo it? It is good for you to worship as long as you believe that what you worship is good.

Farewell, dear. Mr. Lewes is always gladdened by what you write to us, and wafts you many remembrances.—Always yours maternally,

M. E. LEWES.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Mar. 29, '74.

DEAR ELMA—The looked-for table more than fulfils my expectations: the design and the colour of the wood both delight me. It seems to me out of keeping to say so common a word as "Thanks"—let me rather say that your sweet love, and the plenteous signs it makes, are among the blessed influences of my life. That, I am sure, is the end your love contemplates.

Please give my grateful affection to Roly, and tell him that I have tapped my Eau de Cologne with a satisfactory sense of being copiously provided with a relief under the oppression of heated rooms and close railway carriages.

The brush which you have so thoughtfully sent will, I hope, be used solicitously to hinder any dimming of the beautiful lines chiselled by your skilled hand—lines which seem to float about the fine brown surface like inspired waters bent on imitating their memory of flowers once flung on them.

It is so pretty of you to think of little Blanche! She will not be allowed to eat the Bon-bons, but the quaint shoes will enlarge her imagination. As to the cat, it is a piece of magic.

I spoke to Mrs. Fitzgerald the other day, after having been in doubt about her identity, from the hurry of the scene in which she introduced herself to me, but being guided at last by the benevolent expression in a fine face which repeatedly met mine as if expecting a recognition.

Good-bye, dear daughter. Do not let us be very long without hearing of your welfare, which will always make a part in that of —Your affectionate

M. E. LEWES.

During the summer of 1874 on our way to Scotland, where my mother and I went for my holidays, I had the honour of meeting Mrs. Lewes for the first time, and during the visit she asked me to send her a photograph of my mother. With all deference I should like to say how I was struck by Mrs. Lewes's wonderful personality. Her figure was slight, and neither tall nor short; her hair was worn as in the etching by Rajon, which I believe is the only authorised portrait of her. Her voice can only be compared to that of Sarah Bernhardt—in her melting moods: its tones were so low and soft, and at the same time so musical, that once heard it could never be forgotten; but above all else it was her eyes which impressed you—and she possessed that magnetic power of looking down into your soul and of drawing you out and making you speak of yourself—at the same time giving you the impression that she was deeply interested in your doings and all that concerned you. I was a mere schoolboy at the time, but I can remember my intense pride in our friendship, and the feeling that one could open one's heart to her and tell her *everything*, being sure of being understood.

R. S.

THE COTTAGE, EARLSWOOD CN.
July 21, '74.

MY DEAR ROLAND—Thanks! you are a brave fellow for sending me your Mother's photo, and have given me real pleasure. The likeness is as good as I can imagine any likeness to be. So if you get the shepherd's crook laid about your back for your pretty action, you will bear it the better because you know that you not only had the good motive of giving pleasure, but were successful in giving it.

I hope you are sharing our splendid sunshine amidst your fine scenery, and enjoying your holiday to the utmost. I wonder which is the merrier of the two—you or your Mother? Please tell that dear mother that I was very grateful to her for remembering my wish to have a photo of your profile—which I think represents you better than the front face.

You know, you are my adopted grandson, and I am concerned that you should be handsome in all ways—chiefly in that best

way of *doing* handsomely, as the heroic Roland of these times. Are you practising the winding of the horn among the mountains, so that you may not be behind your predecessor and great namesake in that accomplishment?

We ate the delicious Dinan Cake as if we had been youngsters, though in fact we are aged and, just now, rather ailing. But in all other respects—pray tell my dear daughter with my love—we are thoroughly happy and are constantly bearing her in mind and heart.

Mr. Lewes sends his love to you, and I am always, dear Roland—Your affectionate Friend,

M. E. Lewes.

On our return from Scotland my mother proposed visiting them. As will be seen from the following letter from Mr. Lewes a short visit was proposed, my mother as usual being so diffident and so fearful of encroaching on their time.

THE COTTAGE, EARLSWOOD COMMON,
25 Augt. '74.

DEAR FRIEND—For half an hour we will *not* see you ; but if you will spend the afternoon with us, you shall be received with and enfolded by outstretched arms ! I told you when you went away that I counted on your being able to come again ; and on Tuesday next, 1 Sepr., if you find the times convenient, I propose that you leave Charing Cross at 11.15, which will bring you to Red Hill by 12.15. There I will meet you and conduct you to your loving mother, with whom you must stay till ½ past 4 ; and so get back to town by 5.18. However, you will understand that these hours are merely proposed on the supposition that they fall in with your other arrangements. Look into Bradshaw and propose any others—(or any other day) —and be assured that they will suit us equally well. We only protest against the "Half-hours with Great Authors"—a work too snatchy for our tastes.

Polly[1] has been decidedly better of late, and if her Hebrew and Oriental studies were a little less absorbing and exhausting she would be what the racing men call in "good form."

The shepherd's crook is a faithful companion and you may be said to walk out with me every day. God bless you.—Ever yours affectly.

G. H. Lewes.

The Cottage, Earlswood Common,
Sep. 22, '74.

Dearest Elma—Your sweet letter came yesterday. I grieve to see that it gives no address to which I could send this with a chance of its reaching you before you return to Dinan. But I please myself with writing at once—while I am musing the fire burns, and now write I with my pen.

After the letter, in the evening, came the delicate woollen things which well represent the warmth and tenderness of Elma's love. There is hardly any bodily comfort I prefer

[1] A pet name for Mrs. Lewes.

to these gossamer woollen garments which give one warmth without weight. I am also grateful that you think my words worth remembering — especially since they are sometimes enough to hinder you from marrying a man with a quiverful of those problematic blessings. Pray, if you fall in love ascertain first that the *objet aimé* is without encumbrances. If not, let him find some poor governess who is well broken-in and without prospects. I have no patience with these widowers who are always expecting women to take compassion on them, and never themselves take compassion on women really forlorn. They must always have the best, forsooth—are always good enough for the best to accept. This is the fine principle of Natural Selection, they will say. I admit it, but it is also the selection of conceited gentlemen.

Little Blanche was here from Saturday till Monday morning, and was showing me the toys which a certain lady brought her—a lady who scatters her pretty gifts over the earth, like the symbolical Spring in the

pictures, with a miraculous cornucopia. She (Blanche) was especially delighted with her "s'an," which swam in my basin to admiration.

Mr. Lewes has just had a horrible fit of headache, but is now his bright self again, and is beginning to pack the books in preparation for flight homewards. He is gone off to Reigate to get labels, but I know he has love to send or keep, wherever mine goes or stays, and he delights in you, too, for your own sake—not only because you are good to me. He certainly does enjoy reading your letters, and he has no shame, as I may well have, in reading words which express the height of your affection rather than my desert. But I will not be like Coleridge and talk humility, which somehow never is active when one thinks one's audience likely to assent.

In one point, dear, you cannot be hyperbolical, and that is in believing that my strongest desire for you is that you should feel helped by me to be—what you are so well capable of being—"a joy, and

blessing, and comfort and strength to others." You see I am using your own words, which are very precious to me. Only don't try what is too difficult—too great a risk of failure.

I am not too strong, though on the whole better. And this feebleness of mine makes me value very much your considerate tenderness, which is content with a silence rarely broken. I must touch on this, because I have felt particularly your delicacy in refraining from putting an address, that I might not have the possibility of self-reproach in not writing. You could teach me many refinements of perfect love, which does not come altogether by nature but is acquired in the long discipline of our own need.

Good-bye, dearest Elma. I go into silence, but not that of memory, which will continually speak of you and imaginatively to you.—Your loving Mother,

M. E. Lewes.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Oct. 26, '74.

DEAREST ELMA—Edith was here yesterday, the first Sunday of our presence at home, and she told us things about your health which made me grievously anxious about you. I beseech you to learn as far as possible what is physiologically wise in the treatment of yourself and to act upon the knowledge. The reason why I feel strongly on this point is, that I have had hard experience how all the good in oneself and one's lot may be marred by inconsiderateness about health in the younger years when various better possibilities are still open. Please try and remember that it is a sin to waste your nights in sleeplessness, or squander your young strength in the daytime, when you have any power over the circumstances that bring about such results. I cannot bear to think of your bright spirit being ruined by the eating malaise of imperfect health.

And you have been having a serious

fortnight's illness! I shall not be quite happy till I hear that you are as well as usual again, and that you are prevailed on to promise self-care for the future.

In your case, I imagine, it is hardly ludicrous to say, "Take care of yourself for the sake of others"—perhaps, remembering what you have said to me, I may venture to say in answer, Take care of your body and soul for my sake.

We came home on Friday, but are still bent on one more excursion for a week. After that, we shall be voluntary prisoners in this dim city for many months to come. Let us always know something about you.—Ever your loving

MOTHER.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Sunday [*Oct.* 1874].

DEAR ELMA—There is more joy in the Priory over one Elma that repenteth than over ninety-nine d—d niggers who take care of their carcasses because they have a well-founded suspicion that no one else cares enough for them to take that task

upon themselves. Therefore, dear child, take this to heart and continue virtuously in bed (or elsewhere), till your loving attendant[1] (to whom my grateful thanks, for all the love she shows you) declares you are a fit and proper person to be "at large" again. We have just returned from another week in the country which has set Polly right again, and now she is ready for the desk and Society!

Do you see the *Contemporary Review* in your Dinan diggings? If so, you will be interested I think in Mat. Arnold's papers in the Oct. and Nov. nos. Much that he says on Religion we both think very good, and likely to have a *yeasty* effect on that strange fluid Public Opinion. I myself cannot see how the Bible "makes for righteousness," though I profoundly agree with him that righteousness is salvation—and is not to be sought in meta-

[1] "Your loving attendant" refers to a very dear friend and cousin, the Honourable Mrs. Stewart-Menzies, who is constantly referred to later in the letters as "the guardian angel"—a title which she so richly deserved, nursing my mother with a most unselfish devotion and tender loving-kindness through long periods of illness.

physical refinements about a "personal God," but is to be found in our idealization of human relations and human needs. If you don't take the *Review* at Dinan I will send you the number by post.

What a singular spectacle is presented by the contrast of the general tone of men's minds on this subject of Religion at the present day and that of some twenty years ago! And the progress rushes on, it does not simply move.

Your mother sends her dearest love and wishes. God bless you!—Ever yours,

G. H. L.

26 *Oct.* 1874.

DEAR ELMA—We returned home on Friday, and yesterday Edith came, saddening us with a sad account of your health, and making your spiritual parents somewhat disposed to scold you for your imprudence! —if you were well and strong you would be scolded by me for not attending sufficiently to the ordinary rules of right "conduct of the

body"—even more important than the "conduct of the understanding." For the sake of others, if not your own, do bring a little of your energy and intellect to bear on the question of keeping yourself in a normal condition of health, and do not play tricks with Valerian, Opium, etc.! You will perhaps retort on me that I have not practised my own precepts—but it is not so—I damaged my body by overwork and over-confidence, till it was too late to do more than patch and patch the old carcase. But I take as much pains not to get worse, as I should wish you to take not to destroy the fountain of spirits, energy, and love which still bubbles in your somewhat damaged organism.

I hope to hear a better account of you soon.

We enjoyed our stay at Paris very much, owing to the splendid weather and our very comfortable quarters. We went every night to the theatre and saw *nobody*! From Paris we ran to Soissons and Sedan, Dinant, and Brussels—at the last place

Mrs. Lewes caught cold, which rather spoiled the effect of the holiday, and now we are settling down to the old home routine with an ever-abiding consciousness of the fact that the climate of England is not the climate of France.—Ever your loving

G. H. Lewes.

In the following letter the reference to flogging a Frenchman is as follows:—

One day my mother and I, a wee chap, accompanied by our dogs, were going for a walk along a country road in Brittany. We passed a man breaking stones by the roadside; he had one of those large nondescript dogs with him which one often sees in Brittany. This dog set upon a small terrier of ours, and would speedily have made mince-meat of our little dog, had not my mother rushed to the rescue. Meanwhile the road-mender pushed my mother roughly aside, and would have annihilated our dog with a huge boulder he held in his up-lifted hand, had not my mother dexterously pushed his arm aside as the stone was in the act of descending. My mother seized the man by his shirt-collar, and gave him a thorough good thrashing with her dog-whip. To do the man justice, I must admit that he took his thrashing in good part and made no attempt to retaliate. On our return, about an hour later, the man was still there, and my mother went up to him and shook hands and presented him

with a *douceur* of 5 francs. I may add that they were firm friends ever after, and always had a smiling *bonjour* for each other when they met. R. S.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Jan. 10, 1875.

DEAREST ELMA—Your letter made the best part of my breakfast this morning. I *was* sorry that you had to keep your bed (though I am not consciously open to the accusation of having sent you there). But now the sorrow seems like a dispersed but once clinging mist, which has given way to the usual warm sunshine surrounding my idea of you. It is really a cordial to me to know that you are well again. And you will be good and careful henceforth, won't you?—keeping a spiritual scourge for that naughty spiritual self which afflicts its fleshly yoke-fellow. It is of no use asking advice against your sins if you don't take care of your body, and let it get distempered by fitful habits which are the makers of new sins. But I am not writing for the sake of this lecture, being inclined to believe

you blameless until I have evidence of the contrary.

As to your intolerance, dear child, I like a little unselfish indignation, and think one's soul can hardly be healthy without it. Only, of course, it needs constant checking by a vision of life in that other aspect—that he who hates vices too much hates men, or is in danger of it, and also may have no blame to spare for himself. If moral indignation can be well tempered with self-blame, surely it is a good thing. I am very fond of that old Greek saying that the best state is that in which every man feels a wrong done to another as if it were done to himself. Better have an ideal of right-doing that makes you by chance flog a cruel Frenchman, than have no ideal at all. Caring for the just and loving deed of every day in your part of Dinan, carries your heart strongly to every other part of the world, which in its need of love and justice is just in the same predicament, and in this way you get a religion which is at once universal and private.

So I should not like to see you quite dispassionate in the presence of ugly conduct.

But your trouble about your mother touches me more nearly. The parting will have to come—I have known twice over, at widely different ages and in quite a different way, what the final parting with a parent is. But now I imagine from your description of your mother that the solemn trial may be deferred for years: you spoke of her, I think, as having a fine strong physique, and I remember her photograph.

As for the news of us on which you insist, it is altogether good. We have both been exceptionally well this winter, and have quite escaped colds, until this morning that Mr. Lewes complains of slight sore throat. He has nearly done correcting the proofs of his second volume, and is already happy amidst the manuscript for a third. I am busy—which means not that I am doing *much* but that I am always *doing*. Small claims multiply; and that is the reason why I am obliged to restrict

letter-writing as much as possible, because the various divisions of my day are so filled that the absolutely necessary answers to correspondents are all my feebleness can manage without infringing on my morning hours from 9 to 1, which are my only hours for writing. And I am writing a book—since you wish to know that, I tell it you. But I am not fond of announcing that fact, because I never feel any confidence that I can do anything until it is ready for the word *Finis*. Always there is the possibility of breaking down, or of doing what is too poor to afflict the world with. For our world is already sufficiently afflicted with needless books, and I count it a social offence to add to them.

My best love to Roly. And I say "Amen" to the answer you gave him about the orchard-robbing. Ask him whether he intends to steal venison because Shakspeare did? If so, we will only forgive him on condition that he writes Hamlets, Macbeths, Lears, and "As-you-like-its." I sympathize with the love of a foray,

but the lads should properly have to go through a skirmish, and not carry off their spoil quite easily.

Once more, dearest daughter, keep well. And be sure always that you come to my thoughts among the blessings which life has given me—that I am your always mindful and loving spiritual Mother,

M. E. LEWES.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
27 *Jany.* '75.

DEAR ELMA—You need no assurance from us that everything which befalls you touches us nearly, and that we deeply sympathize with you in your present trouble.[1] It is only as a silent pressure of the hand that this comes. Words are necessarily vain, except as an indication of sympathy, in sorrows that must be borne and cannot be alleviated.

If on your way back to France you pause in London, and it would give you

[1] The "present trouble" refers to the death of my grandmother.

the slightest comfort to hear a word of love from Madonna, come with full assurance. We could give you a bed if you would like it.—Ever your loving

G. H. LEWES.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Tuesday [*early in* 1875].

DEAR ELMA—It is not to thank you for the lovely *table* (and the thoughtful tenderness of the additions), because you said I was not to thank you—and because I can't properly express on paper in blue ink what is written on my heart in red ink. It is for another purpose I write—to beg you to dismiss from your mind the very preposterous anxiety lest your visits or letters should ever be other than a delight to us. Because we seclude ourselves from acquaintance that makes us only the more glad to have friends, and you are one of the *inner circle.*

Therefore as you value my approbation, and your own peace of mind, no more of the old hesitation and reticence!

You may have your time fully occupied while passing through London. We would not stand in your way; only mind and let us have the unoccupied hours. Surely you might spend the afternoon and evening with us?

Understand that you are to fix your own times, but understand also that any doubt of your presence here being otherwise than delightful to us is an offence against friendship.

Madonna sends her dearest love and a kiss.—Ever your loving G. H. L.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Mar. 4, '75.

DEAREST ELMA — Yes! the beautiful Saint Esprit came duly, and I must have been in a state of more than usually dulled sensibility or I should have sent on a letter to Dinan immediately that you might know of your messenger Dove being in its destined place at once on your arrival. The dulled sensibility is to be accounted for by a wrong

condition of body which has been creeping over me for some time, and which, according to the doctor, has just declared itself as the presence of that admirable substance called "gravel" in the place where it is least wanted—even less than in one's boots. The attack, however, has been a very slight one. I lay in bed all yesterday, but this morning I am in my study chair, as usual, to receive the parcel of Elma's comfortable devices. I believe in Providence, and one of its many names is Elma.

I had meant to wear the Saint Esprit to-night at a musical party where Joachim and all the next best to him were to play divinest music. But I am forbidden to stir out, and have to resign myself. Worn the Dove will be, if I live—and the flannel belt and the slippers. "Ever more thanks, the exchequer of the poor."

I enclose with this note the autograph of Charlotte Brontë.[1] The unlovely sarcasms with which it is wound up refer to the course taken by the *Leader* concerning the

[1] Charlotte Brontë's letter. See Appendix.

"Ecclesiastical Titles Bill." It is altogether a characteristic letter. Also I return Mrs. Anderson's prescription, which Mr. Lewes has already had made up in preparation for distant needs, promptitude being the vehicle of all his virtues—the briskest little vehicle imaginable.

I will not write more now, because my head is achy. But it comforts me to send this scrap of writing which in its way is also a winged messenger, carrying the love of your affectionate

MOTHER.

Let us know how your health goes on.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Mar. 24, '75.

DEAREST ELMA—I have been an invalid ever since I wrote to you until the last two or three days, but now I am recovering heart and hope. The tender attention I get might reconcile me to a month's ailing, if I were quite resigned to doing nothing and receiving all things.

Our weather has been cruelly cold. North-east winds have dried up our bodily moisture and the sky has been gloomily grey. Only for the last three days has there been a promise of Spring in the air. How have you been? you must remember that until you can report yourself quite strong again, we need a more frequent reassurance about you.

Mr. Lewes is both glad and sorry at once that he has to prepare a new edition of his *Life of Goethe*—glad that the public has absorbed the old edition, but sorry to quit his other writing for the necessary interim. He is very well, occasional headaches excepted, and sends his love to you.

I wore the Saint Esprit on my black velvet the other day, and he was very proud of its effect. I have been too weak to be proud, but I am getting so strong again that I shall be equal to that sinning by and by.

If we could only have some sunshine! Sunshine becomes more and more of an independent joy to me — independent of

everything but husband and health, which are rather weighty provisoes.

I am writing this on my knees at one corner of the evening fire, and Mr. Lewes is reading his beloved physiology at the other corner. Imagine us pausing to speak of you and wondering if there is anything else to tell you. I conclude that there is nothing but this—that I am your loving mother,

M. E. Lewes.

The Elms, Rickmansworth, Herts,
Sept. 2, '75.

My dearest Elma—We both think that the idea of your writing a detailed story of your self-initiation as a wood-carver is one to be carried out without delay. I should imagine that many girls and women might be helped through your experience, directly or indirectly. And if your loving heart makes it a necessary condition to your doing the good work, that you should mention me (with due discreetness) I will not raise any obstacle. Only we must not

see what you write beforehand. Neither Mr. Lewes nor I must have anything to do with it. This is quite absolute. You have a perfect right, my sweet daughter, to say what you think fit (I have confidence in your sense of fitness) about any relation my writings may have had to your history. My writings are public property : it is only myself apart from my writings that I hold private, and claim a veto about as a topic. And I particularly object to Mr. Lewes's having any cognizance of what you choose to say. If you cannot trust your own judgment, consult some dispassionate friend —friends are not wanting in dispassionateness as critics of the praise given to some one else, and what your overflowing heart prompts is sure to have a sound of eulogy which, as your fervent countrymen would say, will seem "strong enough," *i.e.* quite tremendously strong to your friendly critic. I don't, of course, mean that you will write any direct praise, but that your grateful ardour may easily seem to others more than George Eliot deserves.

But write your paper with a vision of the idle women's needs before you.

Your spiritual mother has been a sadly dispirited mother of late, with a distaste for herself and her doings which would make life heavy if it were not borne up by soft strong wings of affection—tender husband's affection. You must have known much in your shorter but often difficult life of that double, reflected depression in which one is constantly wondering how much is bodily feebleness, how much mental anxiety. But since you say nothing of your health I am hoping that you are stronger—though I fear your silence is not good evidence. Have you left off naughtily working too long at night? And do you encourage sleep in all rational ways? Please to bear in mind that in being careless about your nerves you are endangering your "precious soul."

We shall leave this place on the 23d. It will be time to do so, for the autumn mists on our meadows would not be sanitary. I suppose we shall go down to the coast

while our London house is being cleaned, and perhaps I shall be quickened into more vigour by that change. I have constant cheerfulness by my side in my other self. He works with delight, and on the whole has been much better in this summer abode than in the last, at Redhill.

I am much comforted that you are no longer in anxiety about Roland. Please offer my loving remembrances to him, and tell him that the Eau de Cologne has seemed much more desirable to me since he became my purveyor. But my consumption does not go on so fast as his kind care in providing.—Always, dearest Elma, your loving Mother,

M. E. Lewes.

The Priory, 21 North Bank, Regent's Park,
Nov. 19*th* '75.

Dearest Elma—I am too busy to write a letter. This is not a letter—it is a wail at your silence. How can you leave your parent so long in ignorance about you?

And if I had time to write, I should tell

you that you seemed to misunderstand that letter of mine from Rickmansworth long ago, in which I said that we must not see the paper you wot of before publication. You spoke of "trouble"—excused yourself from the suspicion that you intended to give trouble. That was rather cruel. As if trouble for your sake would not be very sweet to my good husband, if not my indolent or selfish self! The grounds of my prohibition were quite remote from the question of trouble. I shall explain them more fully when we see you.

Write me a few words at least, to assure me that you are well—that Roland is causing you no anxiety—that all things are peaceful with you.

We long to have some assurance that you love us still. But whether or not, I am as ever—Your faithfully affectionate

MOTHER.

I should mention that we *have* heard of you once of late, as a fairy godmother sending a box of toys.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Dec. 20, '75.

DEAREST ELMA—The pretty blue and white letter (*style parfait*) arrived safely in the hands of the faithful post, and has already kept my feet warm for several days. You have just fitted my feet—I like plenty of room, and feel any pinching in my body as a pinching of my thought.

Thanks, sweet daughter. I wish I could say that we are well, but we live in hope of being better.—Always your loving

MOTHER.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Mar. 3, '76.

DEAREST ELMA—Thanks for the sweet violets and still sweeter letter, which promises delightful things—the best being that you will come over in April and see your parent, who is hanging to life by a very indifferent loop of flesh. Imagine us both as ghastly as possible, that the sight of us may not shock you too much.

I wrap myself already in the new plaid

that is being woven for me, and take its soft tissue as a symbol of gentle affection. As to the reprints, dear child, it was like your warm heart to get them done, but *they must be destroyed, please.* You could not hinder the suspicion that we had prompted the distribution—that would be the immediate conclusion of ordinary minds, and would by and by become their absolute statement. I have not read the article. Mr. Lewes carefully protects me from reading about myself, and as soon as I know that there is an article on me in any periodical, I wait till it is cut out before I take up the print for other reading. But Mr. Lewes reads everything about me that comes in his way, and he thought, with you, that the said account of me in the *W.* was well written and done in an excellent spirit. He read aloud to me two sentences. But the details of fact are quite erroneous, except the Liggins story, which is correctly told.

As to the Table, the photograph shows a great beauty, but our own are beauties too

of which we are very proud, and we don't see why you should have the trouble of packing and bringing anything better in exchange. Pack and bring yourself, my daughter. You will cheer greatly the heart of—Your anxious and affectionate

MOTHER.

Our love to Roland, of whom we hope to hear the best news when you come.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
April 29, '76.

DEAREST ELMA — You grieve your mother by dwelling on your innocent bit of hyperbole as if it were a sin. We are not so dull as to require every word to be literal or else to have an elaborate commentary. I am sorry now that I made that drollery about the writing the occasion of a remark which was entirely precautionary, and referred to possible words that might drop from you in the liveliness of conversation, without the least sense of mischief in anything that had been actually said. It was

my awkwardness to link my caution about the servant's ear with your innocent exaggeration, which, I observed, had raised a smile.

We should have been mere blockheads to have supposed that your words had done any harm, even if you had expressly directed them against book-writing instead of letter-writing. Were we not "present company"? —and had we not had our patent to write for you? And does not that quick-eared servant know that you think too much of us?

So pray dismiss the subject for ever from your soul, and save your penitence for a real transgression.

The petticoat is very beautiful, after the beauty of petticoats—perfect in colour and in texture—far better than any bat's wing I have ever been indulged with. It is not *par* for Elma's presence and tenderness, but it is a pretty message from her.

My ailings having got worse rather than better Mr. Lewes insisted on sending for Dr. Andrew Clarke, and he is trying to make me less good-for-nothing by feeding

me up and making me drink Burgundy. It seems that my usually strong pulse has got sadly flagging.

We were disappointed not to see you again. Thank Roly for his pretty letter to me.

I and my other self greet you with warm affection, and shall be glad to have news of you from Scotland.—Always your loving Mother,

M. E. Lewes.

Lady Claud Hamilton spoke with pleasure of having seen you, that Sunday you were in Albemarle St.

The Priory, 21 North Bank, Regent's Park,
May 10, '76.

Dearest Elma—I am wearing the elastic belt, and nothing can be more soothing in the way of woollen. But my husband, who has been wearing the same sort of thing for some time, finds that this loose web stretches enormously and will not shrink in washing. If so, that absence of strings which in the first instance mitigates

the misery of dressing would by and by become a torment. *Qu'en dis-tu?* In any case, I get pleasure out of your pretty thoughtfulness—always spiritually, and in the present moment physically.

As to our going away, it will not be before the 31st, and we shall probably be obliged to stay some days later. We cannot be certain of the day. I have been again ailing for the last few days, nevertheless I have been seduced into accepting some invitations—first, for the sake of music, and secondly for the interest of meeting certain people. They are all for next week, winding up with Oxford on the 20th. After that, I hope to remain at home.

About the Maritime Alps, dear, set your mind at rest. We shall stay nowhere unless we find comforts—the expedition up the heights will be worth doing if we resolve to come down again the next day. And the place recommended to us has an excellent hotel. We are not bound to any programme and shall stay or go according to enticement.

You know that you will be welcome whenever you can come to us, but if you take the long journey from Scotland you will hardly go back again, but meet the prayers from Dinan and go home.

Mr. Lewes is braving the East wind, doing errands in town, else he would send his love.—Your always affectionate

MUTTER.

THE PRIORY, *Sunday Evening.*

DEAREST ELMA—I have been rather melancholy ever since you left, that your visit was spoiled. For me, at least; because I could not say one word to you of my gratitude for all your goodness to me in sending me deliciously warm things from Scotland and thinking of me in all tender ways. Also, this sense of hurry and uneasiness made me *distraite* when I was parting with you, and you may have thought my manner coldly preoccupied when I was really feeling annoyed that your visit was ending without my having

had any opportunity of showing you what was in my heart. And it is all without remedy now!

The most satisfactory part of an unsatisfactory business is that I made the acquaintance of gentle Mrs. Menzies.

These useless words are written as a relief to myself—before going to bed. Perhaps it may be a needful explanation of my general dulness that I had some aching of the gums all the afternoon—an unpleasant symptom which has been teazing me for the last week. Such are the griefs of —Your loving mother,

M. E. Lewes.

The Priory, 21 North Bank, Regent's Park,
Monday [*June* 1876].

Dear Elma—Your visit was so horribly spoiled yesterday owing to the loud and insusceptible Trollope that you must bring Mrs. Menzies to dine here on Wednesday at 6.30. It is the only time we shall be free, and even then Charles and Gertrude

will be with us—but you won't mind them perhaps, and we shall have you for a good long spell.

Did I mind being kissed before company? *La belle demande!* As well ask if we object to the flowers with which you brighten our table.

Did I tell you that the King of the Belgians particularly wished to make Madonna's acquaintance and she wished—he might get it! However, I had an interview with H.M. in German, French, and English on *Life of Goethe*, Italy, Belgium, and English pronunciation. He was very amiable and not silly—which for a crowned head is something!

Now don't be engaged on Wednesday and do come!—Yours ever,

G. H. Lewes.

[*Postcard.* Post-mark, June 10, '76.]

THE PRIORY, *Sat.*

DEAR ELMA—Our trunks are packed and the carriage at the door, but Madonna thinks it would gladden your heart to know that after all the lotion *was* of use in allaying the irritation of her gum.—Ever yours, G. H. L.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Sep. 12, '76.

DEAREST ELMA—We think you will like to know that we are at home again, and are strengthened by our travel. At first we were unfortunate. When we arrived at beautiful Aix, where I promised myself that I should get well upon the rich greenth penetrated by sunlight, I fell really ill, and we soon saw that we must give up the Italian project. So we presently turned northward (after a visit to Chambéry and a pilgrimage to "Les Charmettes"), and we even feared that we must wend slowly home. But after lingering a little

too long about Lake Leman we resolved to try Ragatz, and even the getting on to rather higher ground in our journey thither did me good. Ragatz itself began to set me up, and when I tell you that every day, during the greater part of our three months' absence, we walked about five hours, beginning our exercise before breakfast, you will perhaps be sceptical as to my want of health and strength. After Ragatz, we tried Stachelberg and the Klön-thal, keeping away from the usual haunts of the English and Americans. Then we went by Schaffhausen on to the Schwarzwald and lingered at St. Blasien, a *Luft-kur* which might also be called a *Ruhe-kur*, so still are the pine-tops against the serene heavens. Our journey home was made very slowly, lest we should tire our poor bodies into invalidism again, and we arrived only a week ago. Mr. Lewes, notwithstanding fluctuations, revisitings of cramp and too frequent headaches, is on the whole much stronger, and is pronounced to look better than he did three months ago.

We really enjoyed our fresh vision of the mountains, and our walks by the shady sides of great torrents, or in the stillness of the pine woods, or in the open sunshine among grassy places. And the little inconveniences of sojourn in hotels have given new zest to our home comforts—but I need not tell you things which are in the history of every mortal who has a home and has once travelled away from it. The best travel is that which one can take by one's own fireside, in memory or imagination.

But whether at home or abroad, "thy woollens are ever with me." (The quotation marks have reference not to the Bible, but to my thoughts, which I this morning uttered aloud to Mr. Lewes.)

And how are you? and how is Roly—how is sweet Mrs. Menzies?

The thistle tea-service is not, I trust, felt to be a vanity, but helps the cheerfulness of tea-time. Tell me all about yourself.

We are as happy as life can make us. On Saturday we went to see our children

in their Kentish cottage, which they have built to themselves on a glorious, high common, where they have a far-stretching country below them and a wide sky, the sunset red behind the heather in front of their little drawing-room window. I drank tea out of the pretty tea-cup that you made a present of to Blanche—that having been a pleasure prepared for me in her mind, under her Mamma's inspiration.

Mr. Lewes sends his love with mine. We shall both look for your hand-writing on the backs of letters until we have been satisfied with news of you.—Ever your affectionate mother,

M. E. Lewes.

Madonna has not told you how often your name was on our tongues—often suggested by the fact that your *stick*—the famous vine!—was in my hands as we clomb the mountain sides. Nor has she told you how she began to teach me Hebrew, and how in consequence we made the woods astonished at the uncouth sounds

of my bungling attempts at speaking the language of Mirah and Mordecai.

G. H. L.

THE PRIORY, 21 N.B.,
Oct. 4, '76.

DEAREST ELMA—The blue slippers and the soft white kerchief, opened by my husband, lay against my plate when I came down this morning, and they made the best part of my breakfast. My own particular Providence in Brittany is wonderfully well informed, for this cream-coloured silk kerchief is just what I wanted, and without my said little Providence I should never have got it. I shall make many *actions de grâce* when I am wearing it.

We are going this morning into Cambridgeshire to pass three days with a friend of ours of whom I daresay you know something—the Mr. Hall who was once the Mr. Bullock gratefully remembered in the country round Sedan. He found an excellent second wife there, the sister of the Protestant pastor, and she plays her

part admirably as the helpmate of an English country gentleman.

Some of our continental bloom has left us in the London air and under the transitions from warm to cold, and from cold back again. But we are not yet quite run down to the old level. Mr. Lewes has begun the printing of his third volume of *Problems* and is very happy in revision of his written sheets.

Will you write us some news of you soon?—how far you have become learned in archaeology and have been fascinated by archaeologists, etc. etc. Your letters cheer us. I wish we could do more for you—not because you need it, but because our hearts long for it.—Always your loving

MOTHER.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Sunday, 19 *Novr.* '76.

DEAR ELMA — We both exclaimed "What a handsome fellow!" as the photo met our eyes—he has indeed a sweet and noble expression, and I have placed him, beside his mother, in the small album reserved for Family Phizzes—away from the herd.

Madonna in bidding me send her love hopes that with each anniversary of our friendship-making there will be a renewal of love, and

Here a visitor interrupted my sentence and what it was going to be I can't recover. Never mind, it was something loving you may be sure.

She has been ailing a good deal lately, toothache succeeded by tooth-drawing—biliousness and general depression. But she seems all right again now. I have had lumbago, but have not been prevented doing my work, which is all I can expect. Charles and Gertrude have left their

country cottage and come back into our fogs—they and the children flourishing.

At no distant time—when I have made use of them—I shall send you for your autograph collection several pages of notes by Charles Darwin, written by him àpropos of my articles on his hypothesis which appeared some years ago in the *Fortnightly Review*. They are very interesting as notes—and as autographs you may prize them; at any rate there is no one I would sooner give them to.—Ever your loving

G. H. L.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
23 Decr. '76.

A merry Xmas, dear Elma, to you and Roly! and if wishes will draw down blessings, you will be blessed.

Herewith I send you the precious autograph, which you alone among my friends I care to give it to—it is the batch of notes which Darwin wrote at my request on some articles of mine on his hypothesis, which

appeared in the *Fortnightly Review*, April, June, July and Nov. 1868.

You will be glad to hear that at last we have secured a place in the country which promises to fulfil our expectations. There are 8 acres of beautiful grounds and wood, with a house not too large for us, five minutes from a station, 70 minutes from town, sandy soil, lovely country, and nice neighbours. It is called "The Heights" —Witley, near Godalming, Surrey. Next door on either side are Birket Foster and Sir Henry Holland—the son of our old friend. It is *there* we intend to have you as a guest next summer!

Owing to the dreadful state of the money market we have got this place for £3000 less than was asked! Isn't that luck?

Madonna is pretty well just now, greatly comforted by the testimonies she receives from Jews and Jewesses in Germany, France, America and England—especially the learned Rabbis, who seem to think *Deronda* will instruct, elevate, and expand the minds of Jews, no less than

modify the feelings of "Christians" towards the Jews.

We are to spend Xmas with our fervid Scotch friends at Weybridge — our own children having their family gathering with Gertrude's relatives.

When I asked Madonna if she had any special message for you, she said that beyond her dear love there was nothing but to say how she wished to hear full particulars of your joys and sorrows, occupations and plans, whenever you care to send them. "She knows I like receiving letters—it is the answering them I don't like!"—Ever your loving G. H. L.

The first part of the following letter refers to a very pathetic incident. At our home at Dinan one night my mother received a note in a strange hand, begging her to come at once to see some one who was dying. She immediately answered the summons, and found a poor English lady, a Mrs. W——, who was in truth very near the end. This lady said that she had sent for my mother to ask her to take her little dog, as she had no one with whom to leave it. Mrs. W—— told my mother that she had frequently seen her and her friend (Mrs. Stewart-Menzies) out walking with their dogs, and

that she knew that her little dog would have a good home if she could only formulate her request, and she looked up pathetically at my mother and said, "But you were young and strong, and I could not catch you up, and so I ventured to send for you." I need not add that my mother and cousin nursed this poor lady to the end, and that the little dog had the happiest life as long as it lived. I may add that there was a husband—a poor weak creature—who was also very substantially helped by my mother and cousin. R. S.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
New Year's Day, 1877.

DEAREST ELMA—Your dear letter telling us how you have had the blessedness to be an angel of mercy to one in the last great need, is the most precious thing the Christmas week brought me—better than winter roses which came with fresh white petals all the way from Wales. The old, old poet says that the lingering years bring each something in their hand to every mortal,—having in his mind perhaps the something good rather than the many things evil. To me it seems that a year could never bring any one a more substantial good than the certi-

tude of having helped another to bear some heavy burthen—of having lessened pain and given the sweetness of fellowship in sorrow. That is just the one good which seems the more worth having, the more our own life is encompassed with shadows.

Does this sentence sound like a moan—as if I were thinking *myself* an object for pity? I should deserve an extra whipping for such ingratitude. I have no sorrows of my own beyond a rickety body and the prospect of the great parting. But the ruinously rainy weather, and the threat that mortals may make fresh miseries for each other by rushing into war, are a dark curtain round us all at this ending and beginning of times.

I have been pleasantly interrupted in my writing by a box—imagine what box!—the sacred bon-bons, which we will deliver, unviolated even by our eyes, to the little ones at Hampstead the next time that the weather lets us drive up the hill.

You know all the news about us from my "corresponding partner." We have

only seen our new country house once, and that by the finest weather, so that I rather tremble to take another view. And we both of us like to live undisturbedly in our ideal world, where furniture and tradespeople are an inexpensive comedy—rather than to see about our own wants and give orders. In fact, we don't like our own business, in the external sense. But these are the grievances of people who have more than their share in the world.

You, dear, are greatly blessed in having a friend to your share, who is of one mind with you in your best wishes and deeds. Please ask her to accept my love and to think of me as one who would like to know her better. I hope also that Roland's memory will grow with his legs, and that he will not get strange to the friends who knew him first when he was a small fellow.

I have several letters to answer this morning, so do not think me quite gratuitously shabby that, writing so seldom, I write so little. I am not in good condition

just now, and seem to be keeping my head above a slough with some difficulty. But doubtless a crisp frost will do me good along with the country in general.—Always, dearest Elma, your anxiously affectionate

MOTHER.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
23 *Jan.* '77.

DEAR ELMA—*Cook* sends her duty to Mr. Roland, and cannot sufficiently thank him for his kind thought of her.

Elizabeth[1] ditto, and declares she "will never part with her needlebook."

Madonna ditto, with a kiss for her Eau de Cologne, which she *will* part with—to her, or *your*, handkerchief. The violettes are still full of perfume.

G. H. L. sends his love to Mrs. Menzies, whose cake has her own rare combination of sweetnesses.

But why, dear Elma, when you had pen in hand, refrain from telling us more about

[1] The parlour-maid at the Priory.

yourself? For example, what was the history of your *protégé* dog—and his former master? The story deeply interested us—with a sort of shadowy fear lest the man should turn out a bad lot after all. This didn't make your and Mrs. Menzies' conduct a whit less lovable—only in our experience weak brethren are so often vicious brethren, and one gets to repent having spent so much sympathy on them.

The sun has come at last after these weeks of rain. We have got through the bad weather wonderfully. But now the bother of the house, its alterations, and new arrangements with servants, etc., are depressing.—Ever your loving

G. H. L.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Feb. 5, '77.

DEAREST ELMA—I think I should not tell you that Mr. Lewes is ill with a severe attack of rheumatism, if it were not that we long for you to know how precious your *beautiful Highland stick* is to us now that his dear legs will not carry him along even for a few steps without its help.

But what immediately urges me not to delay writing you just a few lines is your having told us that you have been troubled in mind by that article of W. H. Mallock's in the *Contemp. Rev.*—an article which I must think unworthy of the respect implied in your perturbation. Only turn to the page (I think, 182) where he writes of virtue being rendered void and needless by perfect government, and your strong sense will surely guide you into further criticism of a writer who can vent such nonsense as the supposition that a perfect government can arise or be sustained through any other means than the growing virtues of mankind —and who moreover throughout his article

rests on the conception that apart from two doctrines there is nothing in the constitution of things to produce, to favour, or to demand a course of action called right. What kind of God can he boast himself to believe in, on that basis?—I hope I do no injustice to his writing, which I have no time to give any particular attention to. And I wish I could say more to help you than my present troubled distraction of mind will let me. I can only suggest to you that you should put the words "cleanliness" and "uncleanliness" for "virtue" and "vice," and consider fully how you have come not only to regard cleanliness as a duty, but to shudder at uncleanliness; and what are the doctrines which, if taken from you, would make you at once sink into uncleanly habits yourself, and think it indifferent to the health of mankind whether such a habit as that of cleanliness existed in the world or not.

This analogy is imperfect, but its very imperfection will serve to throw the more light on the wide-spreading roots of social and personal good.

No more at present from your sadly troubled but always loving

MOTHER.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Mar. 23, '77.

DEAREST ELMA—Your sweet filial letter came as dew on the withered herb last night. Before I tell you of sufferings, understand that they have nearly passed away. You see, I am able to write to you, instead of employing Elizabeth, whose pen would ill represent that power of "fine language" which is displayed in her speech.

The dear Husband has been trotting about with his usual lightness for the last three weeks, and it is I who have been playing the part of invalid for that length of time. The fact was that I had taken cold and had already felt a troublesome weakness of back before Mr. Lewes's attack came on, and the excitement of attending to him, while it hindered me from taking account of my own ailments, also made me run about, lift, and carry perhaps more than was necessary. So

when he got better I found myself ill with what Dr. A. Clarke declares to be the old trouble. However, after being a dolorous object to look at and exceedingly unpleasant to myself for a long while, I am now able to walk, and to sit through long concerts, and, in general, to return nearly to my old use and wont.

I am ready to be angry with you for not writing us long letters about yourself. You keep us sadly starved of knowledge about you. Do you forget that we are greedy of letters from our loved ones, and only object to writing in return?

Make up for the past silence by sending us as much pretty gossip about your life as you can call to mind. Are you coming northward by and by? And how is your health? And are you contemplating any change for Roly in the way of further schooling?

Yesterday came the last proof of Mr. Lewes's new volume, which is thus off his mind, leaving him at leisure—to feel how nipping the spring is! These frosts which

we should have welcomed at Christmas come now as a threat. All things else are happy with us. Elizabeth, who was going to be married, has given up her unworthy suitor, and we are not any longer expecting domestic disturbance.

Please ask Mrs. Menzies to accept my affectionate remembrances, and believe in me always—with or without proofs—as—Your loving MOTHER.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
28 *April* '77.

DEAR ELMA—How came you to know that the 18th was my birthday? my 60th! I begin to see my *peau de chagrin* shrivelling at a rapid pace!

Madonna has been getting somewhat the better of her trouble, though not yet free from it; but *en revanche* has had her share of headache, biliousness, and influenza, which prevented her fulfilling one engagement—a dinner with the grandeurs (the dismay of the aristos assembled when no George Eliot was forthcoming!)—but has

not prevented her hearing a good deal of fine music. On the 15th we dine with the Princess Louise, on the 19th go to Oxford on an annual visit to Jowett, at the end of the month to Cambridge on a visit to the Sidgwicks—and these, with "private views" of Grosvenor Gallery and Royal Academy, and our Sunday receptions, will be the final blaze of dissipation before escaping to the peace of Surrey. We shall get there by the beginning of June, I hope.

From Natal we have cheerful accounts.

We have Charles staying with us just now. The drains of his house are being attended to, and Gertrude has carried off the children to the seaside.

Lord Lytton knowing my love of good stories has sent me this one. A Bengalee Baboo under examination has this question put: "Who was Mary Stuart? Mention some remarkable incident in her life." *Answer*: "Mary Stuart was a most unfortunate queen of Scotch; who in the seventh year of her pregnancy blew up her husband very severely"!

Àpropos of Mary Stuart, Maddox Brown the painter, notorious for malaprops, said, "I don't understand these attempts to whitewash her. I know nothing good of her. She never showed any affection for any one—except for *Boswell* for a few months"!

Madonna sends love and kisses.—Ever yours affectly. G. H. L.

Give the sweet Mrs. Menzies a kiss for me in answer to her message.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
May 27, '77.

DEAREST ELMA—What other fingers than yours could have put in those myriad stitches slowly growing into apple and cherry blossoms for my sake? I must have known who was the sender of the little packet that came last night even if it had not had your writing on it.

I hope that the lovely flowers on the pale blue were created in spare moments when you were either chatting happily or medi-

tating peacefully, and that you never looked at the petals through gathering tears, unless the tears were of that sort which come from a sense of good too deep for smiles to express. I can imagine various ornamental uses to which the precious square—fair enough for an altar—might be put. But I should like to know what use you had in your mind, and how you have been conceiving its place, so that I may carry out your idea as completely as possible.

On Thursday the 31st we go to Cambridge while our servants will be busy in removing furniture, and from Cambridge we shall pass straight to our Witley home, where we hope to rest in quiet for four or five months. I think we have told you the address, but I repeat it for security—"The Heights, Witley, Surrey."

We are going to camp there experimentally, merely sending down necessaries. For if we like the house and decide to keep it, there is still a great deal of work to be done to it, so that it must in any case have been emptied again.

I wish we never had to think of these outside things. The small remainder of our lives seems all too little for the emotions and ideas which are aloof from our own chairs and tables, dinner-service and paper-hangings.

Let us know what you mean to do this summer and whether you think of coming to England. It is too long since we had precise news of you. How is Roland? Our love to him, and wishes that he may be growing in grace and favour with the best judges.

Mrs. Menzies' gentle face has doubtless looked benignantly at my apple blossoms,—if her fingers have not here and there put in a stitch. Commend us to her kind remembrance.—Always, dearest Elma, your loving Mother (in the spirit),

M. E. Lewes.

THE HEIGHTS, WITLEY, GODALMING,
12 *July* '77.

DEAR ELMA—I should have written to you soon after our arrival here, five weeks since, had I not suspected that you would have moved towards England or Scotland, and expected to hear from you of your whereabouts.

First as to Madonna—she is, and has been, ever since Feby., in constant uneasiness, varied by pain, and occasionally a day or two's interval of relief. This is the only cloud in our heaven—and by dint of persistence it ceases to have a *very* black aspect; but till she is at something like her normal condition I can't help being anxious.

Next as to the new home—it is a small paradise. With many objectionable points in the arrangement and structure of the rooms, there is so much beauty, healthiness, and peace in the grounds and surrounding country that we are in perpetual delight. I turn into my wood to meditate, and the squirrels contemplate me with astonished

contempt: "What, little sir! are *you* there, straddling among the fir-cones and unable to run up among these branches—pondering problems and unable to enjoy nuts—a two-fisted, two-legged, troublous and troubled animal!" The thrushes and blackbirds have their musical remarks to make—and the cuckoo occasionally throws in a distant observation—the pigeons coo and the moles dart into their burrows. The sweet sunshine irradiates the scene — and the blessed sunshine of affection irradiates my interior.

We have seen none of our neighbours yet — except Tennyson — having adroitly called when they were out, and ourselves been out, or "engaged," when they called—so that our *solitude à deux* has not been spoiled.

It is very pretty of Mrs. Menzies (to whom my love) and like herself to give her mind to your domesticities; and I know you will enjoy making Mrs. Chesney happy during her stay—for that is your function in life. Her evasion of Mrs. Senior's ques-

tion reminds me of the young Cantab who in his examination on being asked whether the earth turned round the sun or the sun round the earth? answered, "Sometimes one and sometimes the other." And this leads me to tell you a delicious bit which Lord Lytton sent me the other day from the official report of the examination of native students. Question: "Describe the Horse." Answer: "The Horse is a noble animal; but if you irritate him, *he will not do so.*" Some weeks ago Lytton sent me this also: A native pleader in the High Court of Calcutta defending a native lady is interrupted by the Judge: "I beg pardon Mr. T——, is your client an adult?"—"No, my lud; an adultress."

Charles and Gertrude have got another daughter—we wanted a grandson, but the superior powers thought otherwise. Perhaps they thought with Huxley; in this sense. The other day at dinner Madonna was talking with Bright about woman's suffrage, and the Princess Louise interposed with, "But you don't go in for the superiority of

women, Mrs. Lewes?" "No."—"I think," said Huxley, "Mrs. Lewes rather teaches *the inferiority of men.*"

We are looking forward to Sept. and having you here, so I need not describe the Heights, and as I have no more anecdotes to send I will cease this scribble—scribbled under oppressive headache.

Madonna calls to me that I am to be sure and give her tender love and assurance that you are not likely to be forgotten by her or yours affecly.

G. H. LEWES.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Aug. 4, '77.

DEAREST ELMA—A letter from your dear Roland this morning tells me that you are only just beginning to recover from a very painful attack. I am most thankful to the dear fellow for writing me word of this. For it is one of the qualities of Love to desire that the loved one should not go through suffering and that suffering remain all the while unknown and unfelt for.

I should like to make you promise that you will never hide your pain or sorrow from me. I rather suspect that you follow Shakespeare in that tender desire not to be thought of—

> "For I love you so
> That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
> If thinking on me e'er should cause you woe."

Give up that doctrine or habit with regard to me. Because I would rather be sorry that you were sorry than be ignorantly merry when you were in anguish.—We are fearing that your illness may be made the more trying to you because you have a visitor—Mrs. Chesney, is it not?—and we know something, or have well imagined something, of your ardent hospitality, which would make you regret your illness as an elderly friend of mine once regretted that she was obliged to have a tooth out—it must be so disagreeable to the dentist to attend to an old woman's mouth!

To gratify this excessive altruism of yours I will tell you that I am much better, and able to take a good walk. Mr. Lewes

too is full of enjoyment, though under the drawback of frequent headache. He is enraptured with this part of the country, and we are hoping that you will come and see it in September, when it will be magnificent with the first touches of autumn's golden finger. Tennyson, you perhaps know, is within a drive of us, and he too lives (for a few summer months) on a hill where he commands the double, contrasted beauties of this wonderful county—the wide high heath and the fertile plain. But perhaps you know all about these parts better than I do, and we shall not be able to show you any novelty in a drive to Hind Head.

We have brought your tables down with us for the summer, and a lady who came here the other day was struck with admiration, setting down the table as an expensive bit of Japanese work! We value it much more than if it had been made by unknown Mongolian fingers.

The exquisite blue table-cloth is not brought down, being reserved for a time

when our surroundings will be less makeshift and camp-like. We have no spare-bed, and our own bedroom looks rather as if we had been distrained for rent. But happily we are within 8 minutes of the railway station, so that when you come we can have a good long day together.—You must please let Roly write again and let me know how you are going on. I imagine what tender care you are having from him and from your guardian angel Mrs. Menzies. That is a great comfort to me in thinking of you.

And when you are once more able to write with your own hand, tell me all about Roly—whether any inclination to a special career has declared itself, or whether you have come to any definite arrangement concerning his future. He writes very prettily —I mean, that his handwriting is very clear and well-shapen, as it was bound to be according to any satisfactory results of *hérédité.*

You see, I am scribbling hastily, in order that my letter may go off this morning at

10 o'clock—our only post on Sunday.—
Always, dear one, your loving

MOTHER.

THE HEIGHTS, WITLEY, GODALMING,
11 *Augt.* '77.

DEAR, GOOD ELMA!

REPREHENSIBLE IDIOT!—Your conduct with regard to the Chesneys is inexcusable. But to make you feel it properly I must put it before you as I often have to put her conduct before Madonna—that is to point out how injurious to *others* the neglect of self may be. Not only do you give pain to those who love you, by such wilful disregard of your health, but you hamper your own powers of doing good. There!

Again, do you suppose for an instant that your friends would have been pained or any way inconvenienced by your simple statement of the fact that your tooth was loose and that your eating must be slow? It is an insult to them!—But the notion is so characteristic of you and of Madonna that I can't be as indignant as I ought.

Now you are getting better, of course Madonna and I shall be only too pleased to hear all you can tell us of your plans for Roly (to whom our love) and yourself. When we have the delight of seeing you here you will go into detail, but meanwhile we shall be glad of a sketch.

Kiss that dear Mrs. Menzies for us—not in payment of her constant goodness to you, because she gets ample payment for that in the indulgence of her own generous nature —but in acknowledgment on our part that there is a debt to pay.

When you write next to Mad^me. Jaubert[1] tell her how very much we have been interested in her account of Heine, which we have lent to friends who were also interested, and how we admired the part she herself played in that pathetic story.

If you want a delightful book get *Mes Souvenirs*, by Daniel Stern—Mad^me. D'Agoult—the mother of Mad^me. Wagner.

[1] Madame Jaubert was a most delightful little French lady who came to reside next door to us at Dinan. She was like a little fairy, and was always called by Heine his "Marraine."

It is a remarkable picture of the *ancien régime.*— Love from Madonna and yours ever, G. H. L.

THE HEIGHTS, WITLEY, GODALMING,
Sep. 14.

DEAREST ELMA — The beautiful clasp arrived this morning—a day after your dear letter. I half want to scold you for devoting too much of your time, strength, and substance to creating pleasures for me. But I cannot find in my heart to say "Do otherwise than your lovingness prompts you." And I am fond of my silver clasp, which is just what I wanted. Bless you, dear, for all your tender thoughts and faithful affection, and believe that every sign you make is precious.

About Roly's destination I rejoice, taking for granted that after his training at the Military College he will be free to choose another vocation than the military, supposing his bent lay away from it.

But two points in your letter are less cheerful to us. First, that you say nothing

of your coming to England (though we encourage the expectation that you must come to plant Roly at Oxford), and secondly, that you confess to being still in a poor state of health. Please remove our uneasiness on these points whenever you can. We expect to remain here until the end or nearly the end of October, and it would be a delight to Mr. Lewes to step down to the railway station and meet a triple group —Elma, Mrs. Menzies (otherwise known as the guardian angel), and Roly, grown perhaps almost out of recognition. Let this vision of mine be a case of second sight.

All is well with us. We are better in health, perhaps from getting acclimatized. And when the weather permits we play at lawn tennis, yielding to the persuasions of an athletic friend who calls me "aunt," and has insisted on fixing up the necessary apparatus on our lawn. Should you not be amazed to see your mother using the bat and running after the vagrant balls? It has done me good, however.

We are very glad to have a kiss from

Mrs. Menzies, and always find our thoughts about you the happier for their inclusion of her. We look to her as the remedy and restraint of a certain "idiocy"—a not-knowing-how-to-take-care-of-herself which belongs to one filled with the inspiration to take care of others. Mr. Lewes, though shut up in his study, is one with me as I write.—Your ever loving

MOTHER.

On turning over this page I was shocked to see how dirty a sheet of paper I had taken. Pray excuse it, and don't attribute the smears to my fingers.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Xmas Eve, 1877.

DEAR ELMA—It would not be a perfect Xmas if our hearts did not specially go forth to you; and although Madonna who was to have written to you is in bed with a cold, and therefore is forced to write by her secretary, you know that what one says, both feel.

Don't suppose it is more than a cold

which keeps her in bed. She has been wonderfully well for a long time—every one remarks how well she looks—and she has not had a hint of pain.

Our Xmas is to be very quiet. We shall be alone to-morrow; and on Wednesday the children and grandchildren come to us. Beyond that our festal program does not extend.

Roly will have brought you a full budget of Oxford experiences—we hope they are pleasant and promising. Tell us about him when next you write. Also about Mrs. Menzies, to whom give our Christmas offering—a kiss.

Did you see—and if so were you not amused at the idea—that they put me up as Rector of St. Andrews University, in company with Browning, Tyndall, Gathorne Hardy and Lord Selborne: pretty assemblage of names! Of course I should have declined, but I was pleased at the idea that there was a sufficient following among the students for the proposal to have been entertained.

Have you seen the translation of the Rabbi's pamphlet *George Eliot and Judaism*? It is very interesting, I think; apart from the personal question. — God bless you! Ever your loving

G. H. LEWES.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Jan. 12, '78.

DEAREST ELMA — The wonderful Box arrived on Thursday evening, but I waited to see your Roland before writing, that I might tell you of the impression he made upon us. We are charmed, in the first place, with his appearance, but—what is much more important—with his manners, which are exquisitely simple and expressive of a sweet disposition. He is coming to us again on Monday, that we may take him to see a Pantomime, which I am pleased to think is a new experience to him. He ought to know what a Pantomime is.

But there is a streak of sadness even across Roland and the Box. It is, that you are suffering from rheumatic gout—and in

the cunning right arm and hand which can make so much useful happiness for you. I am a little comforted to be assured by Roland that in other respects you had recovered your health, no longer suffering from indigestion. (I distrusted your own report.)

And now to the contents of the Box. You certainly possess that gift which you say is denied to your neighbours at Dinan —the delicate intuition of what will be useful or agreeable to your friends. I am at this moment writing on the really beautiful writing-board. It is not too heavy, because I rest it on the elbows of my chair, and the graining and colour, as well as the art spent on it, are soothing to my outward and inward sense. My dainty little white scarf is just what I want and what I should never have got for myself, and the blue one I shall wear in the carriage with appreciation, though I cannot promise to gird myself with it in the house.

Then Mrs. Menzies has rightly divined the philosopher's "Summum bonum" in

sending that splendid *gâteau fondant*, which Mr. Lewes seems to like as much as if he were three boys instead of one elderly author. (The little packets of chocolate also he takes "to his own cheek.") Please give the gentle lady our united love and thanks. I hear with satisfaction that she too will come to London when you make the great move.

The children's share of the loving presents will make a fresh pleasure for ourselves when we drive to Hampstead to take them. I am afraid that you are teaching me to be greedy, for I find myself unduly delighted with getting *le superflu—chose si nécessaire* from your dear ministration, without the least exertion of my own.

The opening of your letter caused us some sorrowful dismay. Had we really been neglectful of you—not writing when you expected us to do so? We had been in the contradictory condition of wondering that we did not hear from you. At last Mr. Lewes said, "On Xmas day I shall write to Elma," and you remember he urged

you to give us full news of you. Then, the next day, came your precious cards, so unlike the machine-made kind, wrought by patient, loving touches of tasteful fingers. Still we waited anxiously for more definite news. You know, when you were at Witley we agreed that you should not leave us in ignorance about you and should let us be idly silent without punishing us.

Your choice of a house in or near London will be a matter of much interest to us. Please keep us well-informed, especially of your being set free from that spirit of infirmity in your right hand. We are very well now—after a fair share of cold, and consequent headaches, and life is very sweet to us though verging near to the valley of the shadow—or perhaps because it is so verging, and the time together so unspeakably precious. Do not ever imagine us forgetful or ungrateful. You are part of the furniture of our souls—among the sacred things on the hearth.—Mr. Lewes sends his best love, and I am your faithfully loving MOTHER.

I forgot to say that the Blotting Books are most opportune and excellent.

About this time Mr. and Mrs. Lewes took me to see my first pantomime. I shall never forget my pride at going to Drury Lane under such an escort, nor do I forget the smiling appreciation of my companions at my wide-eyed delight and wonder at the transformation scenes then in vogue on the stage.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
25 Jan. '78.

DEAREST ELMA—Why will you torment yourself needlessly when you have other inevitable pains? Yes, Roly was right in suspecting that I was tired—I very soon knock up—but the pleasure of giving him a pleasure was so great that no amount of weariness could have dimmed it. A drive home in the fresh air set me up again, and my dinner was not a bit less hearty than usual.

We are quite agreed that your method of bringing Roly up has been a great success. He is a dear fellow, and one more proof of my dogma that the law of loving is the gospel

of the world. No one was ever spoiled by love—only by the self-love of the spoiler!

We are going on pretty well and shall be glad to hear when you are restored to your normal state. Love to Mrs. Menzies. Madonna sends kisses.—Ever your loving

G. H. Lewes.

The Priory, 21 North Bank, Regent's Park,
Mar. 27, '78.

Dearest Elma—Ever since the sweet violets came we have been thinking of you more than usual, and yesterday Mr. Lewes had especially emphasized in his own mind the intention to write to you, when lo! on our return from a concert which deserved to be called heavenly but for the hard seat-backs and the something less than angelic audience—we found your dear letter.

I confess that the thought of your having suffered so much from rheumatism predominates over all the more gladsome impressions from what you have prettily told me about your winter's experience. But I will try to banish that painful past

in favour of the brighter picture—the visit to Paris with your dear Boy. Still, do let me know when you are quite free from deafness and altogether restored.

We remember having travelled to Oxford with a Bishop and his family, and the Pater-familias corresponded to your description. I am delighted to hear of an episcopal example on the side of—I will not say tolerance but —respect for other people's opinions.

As to the *XIXth Century*, my beloved daughter, Mr. Lewes has no intention at present of writing in that periodical, being entirely occupied in producing a Fourth Volume of *Problems*, of which I am now reading the first sheaves in MS. His days of writing for periodicals have long been past. He is very bright and well, not having been troubled with headache for some weeks.

A little while ago I was tormented with a succession of sore throats, but I have at last got rid of them, and am bearing this late winter better than might have been expected of my shivering frame.

The nice cambric handkerchief which protected the violets shall be taken care of till your happy arrival—or rather, I will send it you by post, a natural proceeding which has only just occurred to my block-headism.

We have been having much musical pleasure of late, this being the time of Joachim's visit to England. Also, a great baritone singer, Henschel, has taken up his abode in London, and stirs one's soul by singing fine Handel and other songs. But we are chiefly content in the prospect of getting to our Witley Heights again. This can hardly be till the end of May, workmen being still there, and no chip of furniture bought.

I wish all the outsides of our life could be managed for us by handy sprites like Rumpelstiltchen—I would never anger them by being too curious and wanting to look on.

One is most unhappy about the threat of war, and the frightful demonstration how little way the best ideas have made in the

government of nations. I am glad Roly is not to be a soldier. The "only son of his mother, and she a widow," ought to be spared from that service.

All blessings on you, dear—in which Mr. Lewes joins.—Ever your loving

MOTHER.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
May 8, '78.

DEAREST ELMA—To sweeten our breakfast came your dear letter, which brought both wound and balm in its account of what you have suffered and your present restoration amidst the interesting sights of Paris. Certainly we will avoid Salicylate of Soda, but that you should be able to warn your friends against that fiendish medicine is a poor compensation to them for your affliction under it.

No! I will not return the delicate caerulean neckerchief—I like it too well. Not that I dislike delicate cambric handkerchiefs marked E. S.—but you must excuse

my feminine anxiety for a friend's "set" of such desirable articles, when that friend disperses them àpropos of love and violets. Mr. Lewes scolded me for returning the handkerchief, saying that I denied you your favourite happiness of impoverishing yourself to my advantage. Will it console you to know that I am constantly using a handkerchief marked with a tasteful E. S.?

Last evening we took a young friend to the theatre to see Irving's *Louis XI.*, and I have made my eyes burn with using the opera-glass to watch his face, which for the first time in my observation showed play of physiognomy. And I am going to tire my eyes further this afternoon by looking at the pictures in the Royal Academy exhibition, so don't be surprised that my writing is a little like that of a blind person, for I only half look at my paper. Otherwise we are very well, but a little tired of town, and longing to get to our country home, from which we are kept in exile longer than we had calculated by the slackness of workmen, or rather of

their managers. You cannot persuade us to like furnishing. We grudge the nervous energy spent on the outsides of our aged lives, and we have no faith in our own success—I mean as to choice of what will prove the right thing as part of an *ensemble*. Never mind! these are the grievances of people who have more than their share of the world's too scanty good, and we are not in the least to be pitied except for our imbecility.

Thanks for the indication of the Hotel. We are thoroughly glad to have it.—How have you managed to enjoy Paris without Mrs. Menzies? My best remembrances to her, and grand-maternal love to Roly. Mr. Lewes, I know, joins, though he cannot say so, being on the floor below absorbed in *Problems*.

Elizabeth is going to be married, but I have engaged a servant who has been living with a friend and promises to be satisfactory. Now you know our affairs, and we shall be glad to hear again of yours "anan."—Always your loving MOTHER.

At this time my mother was suffering the most excruciating tortures from rheumatic gout, which was in the first place brought on by overwork, and aggravated by the violent medicines given to her by the doctors.

THE HEIGHTS, WITLEY, NR. GODALMING,
June 27, '78.

DEAREST ELMA—The day before yesterday came your sweet words with the bit of heaven-scented plant—and may I not say the sweet handkerchiefs, since these, too, will always carry a spiritual odour of the love that provided them?

We are in the country, you see, but several things are wanting to our satisfaction, and first of all some assurance that the brevity of the pencilled love-message is not a sign of your being again afflicted with some bodily ailment. Perhaps you mean to let us know more about you by and by. At present I am happily certain that you are still my good Elma, full of delicate devices for giving pleasure to your aged mother, and letting your generosity fall like

the rain on the just and the unjust. But I am all the while anxious lest you are making my pleasure your compensation for some suffering of your own—rheumatism or other ill which you choose not to *répandre* by betraying.

You will not, I suppose, make your flitting till the autumn, and we like to think that when you do so you will not be subject to the self-inflicted grievances of blundering from which we unpractical mortals are suffering—over and above the more excusable mistakes of uninterested workmen. I have a fine genius for knowing that I have bought or ordered the wrong thing as soon as it is brought home, and hence my house comes to represent with some accuracy what I least prefer—a sort of scum thrown up by my poor mind in the boiling agitation of shopping.

Never mind! The summer is here, promising to save the country from a bad harvest, and the Congress is *there* promising to save it from war.

My only real trouble is, that my Little

Man is sadly out of health, racked with cramp from suppressed gout and feeling his inward economy all wrong. This morning he rose at six and had a walk before breakfast, looking and eating the better for the exercise in bright coolness of the morning.

Let us know how Roland goes on, and that Mrs. Menzies is your unfailing companion. Our love includes them both when it turns our mind towards you.—Always your faithful and tender

MUTTER.

The handkerchiefs are quite perfect. So says Elizabeth, ratifying my own opinion, as she usually does with encouraging condescension. Poor thing, she is going to marry "beneath her station," and entering on griefs she knows not of.

THE HEIGHTS, WITLEY, NR. GODALMING,
10 *July* '78.

MY POOR DEAR ELMA!—We had feared from your silence that you were ill again, and now comes the news from Edith *how* ill you have been and are. That a pang shot through our hearts on getting that news you need not be told—a pang all the sharper from the accompanying sense of helplessness to relieve your suffering. I too—in a small way—am a gouty patient; and every night have two or three attacks of cramp. But it isn't worth speaking about, as during the day I am cheerful and active enough. I only do speak of it to give a sort of authoritative emphasis to my advice to you to avoid fruits, sweets, wines, and all *acid*-making foods, to keep your blood as free from acid as you can by baths, rubbings, exercise, and *diet*. If you could be persuaded to spend a few weeks at a German Bad it wouldn't be bad for you; or if you prefer France, why not go over from Jersey to Vichy or Plombières? England

is the very worst place you could come to with its damp and ever-changing climate.

We have got summer at last—how long we shall have it is a question—meanwhile the Heights is not a bad version of Paradise before the serpents (visitors) spoiled that garden. Madonna, I grieve to say, is and has been much out of sorts, but nothing serious, and no return of her old enemy.

Did she tell you when she wrote that Dr. Lyon Playfair took her down to dinner at the Goschens'? When introduced he claimed having a common friend in Mrs. Stuart. He made himself particularly agreeable. I had no talk with him, though some 30 years ago I used to meet him at Dr. Arnold's.

Our furniture troubles are not quite over yet. All men are liars—upholsterers and builders particularly. But even liars at last fulfil their engagements.

I get up at 6, and before breakfast take a solitary ramble, which I greatly enjoy, but which I can't get Madonna to share. Instead of this, she sits up in bed and

buries herself in Dante or Homer. When the weather is cooler, I hope to get her into regular practice of lawn tennis, but at present, except our drives in the afternoon, she gets but little of the sunshine and breezes to put colour into her cheeks.

I have just been up to ask her if she had any special message to send, and she says nothing but her "dearest love and sympathy"—well, *that* is special. As for me, I send the biggest kiss which will go by post; and send also loving remembrances to Mrs. Menzies, who is the very best Gamp you could have.—God bless you! Ever your loving

G. H. Lewes.

The Heights, Witley, Nr. Godalming,
Aug. 8, '78.

Dearest Elma—What a blessing to see your handwriting on an envelope this morning! We have been in much anxiety about you—I wish I could say we are now quite easy. But I will not dwell on our fears. I will rather think of you with Roly

and his prizes by your side. As long as that fine fellow is good and loves you, there is some sweetness for you in this troublous life.

And I *am* glad about the future £20,000. You are not made for poverty, or anything else that hems in large and liberal dispositions. I should have liked to see you undergoing that affectionate ovation from your neighbours. There will be a wail like an Irish dirge when you leave Dinan.

What I am least contented with after the sad, sad fact of your still needing a nurse, is that Mrs. Menzies should be forced away from you for six weeks. And is it possible that she has a son ready to come into "his property"?

I wish I could tell you better news of my little man. Morally, he is as good as this summer weather and the lovely country, but physically he is below the mark—suffering still from nightly cramp, and often so wanting in his usual spirit and mental energy that he is unable to have his morning's study. But he fights resolutely

against these ills, walking before breakfast, and having mild games of tennis, and accepting gratefully the goods of all kinds except health, which the agencies sometimes called gods, have provided for him.

That he is not up to his average of enjoyment is my only trouble. I am not very well at present, but my ailments are *nichts zu bedeuten.* I have our beautiful valley and distant outline of hill before me as I write, and we both get fonder of the objects in and around our country home.

You say nothing about your own removal, and I am not quite informed whether it is absolutely decided as to time, or capable of being deferred supposing you are still too delicate to undertake new exertion.

We had knowledge of Sir James Cox's death, but thought it better not to write to you about it.

Mr. Lewes sends you his best love and experienced sympathy—for he, too, knows what the sharp pain is which makes turning in bed an unconquerable difficulty. But I trust that he will get over his present

symptoms without a second attack of that kind.

We include Mrs. Menzies and Roland in our warmest good wishes, and love them as part of you.—Always your affectionate

MOTHER.

It is better to write illegibly than not to write at all, *n'est-ce pas?*

The Eau-de-Cologne will be welcomed for your and its own sake.

THE HEIGHTS, WITLEY, NR. GODALMING,
Nov. 5, '78.

DEAREST ELMA—I cannot rest any longer without having some news of you, for silence is never a solacing fact to me, especially with you who are inclined to hide away your trouble lest it should grieve us.

Do beg Mrs. Menzies to spend some of her sweet charity on me, and write me a word or two about you. Remember I am anxious to know the ultimate effect of the German Bath on you. I am so prone to

imagine the worst, that the truth is almost sure to be a comparative comfort.

We shall leave this house on the eleventh (11th) and by the 15th we shall be settled in London, at the old Priory again.

Mr. Lewes has been much tormented with gouty symptoms, but is bright and enjoying, nevertheless. I am variable, but on the whole better than in the summer. One little complaint you and dear Mrs. Menzies can relieve me from, and that is, a tormenting thirst to know all about you. Do have pity on me. The news I desire would include some account of Roland—where he is and how long he is going to remain at Oxford.

The larger world is so sad, with its wars and rumours of wars, that one is more than ever in need of the small world of specially beloved ones.

I am ashamed to add to the much that I am sure Mrs. Menzies has to do and think of, but her heart is as large as my demands.—Always your loving Mother,

M. E. Lewes.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Nov. 15, '78.

DEAREST ELMA—We returned only last night from Brighton, to which medley of fashion and religion we had rather unwillingly gone while our servants moved and got this house ready for us. When we arrived I found your parcel-full of love in the shape of the blue Jacket and the cherishing muffetees. I never saw anything so cozy for the wrists as this product of the poor little rabbits and industrious fingers conjointly. And the Jacket just fits, and is "elegant" as well as comfortable.

Your second letter to Witley put me in better spirits about you with its *rather* more detailed news, and I shall live (if I live at all) in hope that you will get comfortably through the winter at some pleasant Southern place. But please let me know where and how you are, and use no false tenderness of concealment. I say false meaning mistaken, and you know why with me silence about your trouble is mistaken—

because my imagination is often sadder than destiny.

The Slippers that came by post attracted me particularly, and I was full of vanity at the idea of wearing them. But Nemesis smiled grimly at me when I tried to put them on and found them too small! I am not apparently the Cinderella that has a right to anything so pretty.

Mr. Lewes has been sadly during our Hotel days at Brighton, and has been tormented with headache from looking over letters and parcels too hurriedly on his return. But he is getting better at this hour—4 o'clock—and I hope will soon be brightly enjoying our own ingle-nook.

The news about Roly's success under the military examination is very cheering. I suppose he will join you in the South at Xmas. Give our love to him and congratulations, and to sweet Mrs. Menzies our affectionate regards—our wishes that she may be as happy in her life as she makes others to be. For wherever a good, lovely woman moves she makes the world the

better for her presence, just as certain other kinds of women are as fatal as malaria.

We are not quite settled yet—half our books and little personal matters being still unpacked. But I write at once, lest you should be starting from Dinan, and you will overlook a rather fluttered and scrambling way of saying what I want to say as my blessing on your journey. Mr. Lewes sends his love with mine.—Always your faithful

MOTHER.

Mr. Lewes died at this time. The letters which follow bear eloquent testimony to the suffering which his loss caused the writers.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Jan. 30, '79.

You believe that I feel for your suffering, my poor dear Elma, as you feel for mine. I long to know that your stay in London has been of real use to your health.

Bless you for all your goodness to us. I want you to know that He used the beautiful walking-stick in the last days—

asked for it that he might hook it on the foot of the bed and raise himself with it.—And the little pocket-book you sent me is consecrated to words about him.

Do not tell any one in the world that I have written to you. My obligations to the goodness of friends are mountainous. I can only feel grateful. I can do nothing in return. I am gone into a far country—but I am with you, at least I hope you will let me be with you in the spirit as an object of your loving thought. That is how I can be of any good to you—by rousing your own goodness,

M. E. L.

33 Manchester Street, W.
31 *Janry.* 1879.

I limit myself only to saying, Have no fear of my telling any one that the silence was broken by those dear, sad, sweet and most blessed words of yours.

I thank you for them in silence, for it is best.

Alas yes—you are both gone into a land

that is very far off: but my love and worship have followed you, for far more than ever—"oh Thou to whom in Joy's full noon I turned—as now I turn, the Glory being past"—am I your and His most tenderly loving and most faithful servant,

ELMA STUART.

THE PRIORY,
Ap. 4, '79.

MY DEAR ELMA—Before you leave London, come and say Farewell to me. The time I am able to see any one is between 4 and 7 o'clock. But will you send me a post-card mentioning the day (*not* Sunday) in time for me to let you know in case there should be anything to spoil your visit?

I should like to know how the poor wrists and other tortured joints have been of late.—Your loving

MOTHER.

THE PRIORY, *Monday Evening.*

DEAREST ELMA—My feelings would make me willingly see you again, but this week my spare time is all pledged. Bless you for all your tenderness, and be sure that you have done much for me in giving me your affection and in letting me know it.

I wish I could be satisfied that you will not fret about Roland's decision. I have been thinking of it, with this result: that the parting which is inevitable *in some form* between Mother and Son may perhaps have come to you in its mildest form now—before you had arranged your life with fresh expectations. And it is the unshunnable destiny of the elder to renounce. Do not think me hard. I feel all the difficulty of such renunciation.

It was my advantage to have seen Mrs. Menzies' sweet face. She never looked so beautiful to me before.

I shall think more cheerfully of your health now I have seen you, and please fulfil your promise of letting me know about it before very long.—Your affectionate

MOTHER.

THE HEIGHTS, WITLEY, NR. GODALMING,
June 18, '79.

MY POOR DEAR, DEAR ELMA—It has been a sad unriddling to me of the carefully written address on the outside of the letter to find that it was written with your left hand. Ah, how I enter into that one sentence, "Pain (*and all its attendants*) has been my constant state since I saw you"—and worse—"it is so still." I enter into it the more that I am just emerging from a little attack of pain, quite tiny compared with a day or two of yours, but enough to fill my mind with the thought how much more others have had and now have to bear. I am writing in bed, where I am now easy, but my lines will probably run askew.

What courage you are endowed with, dear, what fortitude, to occupy yourself with your sculpture while you are suffering so cruelly. And tell the angelic Mrs. Menzies that she has a most blessed reason for being glad that she was born, in the fact that she is your comfort in your great trial. Since there is sorrow and pain, the best experience

is to know that one has done something to lessen or soothe them.

As for me, I try to make life as interesting as I can, and everybody is good to me. But I am of course more uninterruptedly alone here, and friendship comes to me chiefly in letters. The silence and beauty of this spot would be bliss to me but for —what I cannot write about. I have simply to live, and I must live as well as I can, making myself as little as possible a burthen on the earth, and trying not to be one of that crowd whom Dante puts in the chill mud, making them confess,

> . . . "Tristi fummo
> nell' aer dolce che dal sol s'allegra."

There is no virtue in gloom, which is the easiest hiding-place for languid idleness.

The African daughter-in-law is going on better, and becoming more reconciled to our non-colonial inferiority. And the little girl now goes every day to the *Kindergarten* with her cousins. Charley writes me word this morning that Eliza is beginning to

think better of the Kafirs because she finds our common men so much ruder!

I shall venture to send you a copy of *Impressions of Theophrastus Such*—written by me in the spring and summer of last year, and sent in manuscript to the publisher by *His hands* the last morning he sat at his desk. I was not quite certain before hearing from you that you were still at Dinan.

I have published one volume of His, *The Study of Psychology*—a comparatively thin volume, and am now beginning to print the final volume, which will be as thick as either of the three first.

I think I have nothing else to tell you except the old news that I am the happier for feeling a grateful love raised in me by *your* tender constant love that sprang up in my path all suddenly—in *our* path, and was a fragrant plant that made us both glad.

My love to Mrs. Menzies and thanks to her for being so good a thing in this too evil world.

Let me hear when you are better, dear, and believe me always your loving mother,

M. E. L.

My mother had now completed the finest piece of work she ever did—the buffet here represented. It was made out of solid oak and was entirely her own design throughout; and though so large that it took six men to lift it, yet it was so exquisitely proportioned, each measurement being carefully thought out, that it had a wonderful appearance of lightness. It took a year in its completion, and there is no doubt that the labour it entailed accelerated the illness which had been threatening for so long. I think my mother felt that this was to be the last work of her hands, as she literally slaved at it—working as many as sixteen hours a day to get it completed—and, curiously enough, when it was finished and mounted, my mother could not endure the sight of it, and it used to stand covered with a linen sheet, which was only removed when the many visitors, often complete strangers, came to ask permission to look at it. R. S.

THE HEIGHTS, WITLEY, NR. GODALMING,
Sep. 11, '79.

DEAREST ELMA—I was almost ready to reproach you for letting me be so long without news of you, but I remembered how difficult it might be for you to write, and also your diffident or rather delicate reticence. It is a comfort to see your handwriting in ink again, though the matter is more melancholy than it used to be—and not without a reason, in which I strongly sympathize. I do enter into your regrets of the old time and its hopes, and can understand how the glorious Buffet seems to you sometimes only a record of disappointments. And our heart-sorrows are not easily wrestled with when our bodies are being bruised or tormented. Some little share of this torment I too have been going through—I think almost entirely since I wrote to you, though perhaps I already grumbled at its beginning, for I am a very Greek at making a noise about my bodily troubles. I have had really a rather painful illness according to

my low scale of experience in such matters. But I am now getting strong, and am in many ways better than I was before the illness began.

I shall probably be in London when you come over—nay, I am almost certain to be there by the end of October. As to the Chelsea Embankment, I think your friend was exaggerating. There are still many fine old houses, not likely to be touched at present. The difficulty is to find one empty.

About Roly it is surely the best comfort you could have, that you have done *your* best to secure his welfare, and in any result you will not have to reflect that you thwarted him for his harm. I shall want to know how the new trial succeeds.

Excuse my scepticism, but I cannot help suspecting that there were some echoes about you in the air around Miss Richardson when she wrote out your character. It is sadly true, I fear, that you have "a too vivid realization, and too keen a sense of joy and sorrow," and you must have had very

sharp sorrows, my poor dear. But you have helped others all the better and all the more, so the bitterness in your cup has turned to sweetness for some other sufferer.

The Studentship of Physiology—"the George Henry Lewes Studentship"—which I perhaps told you that I was founding—is now quite settled, and the printing of the last thick volume of *Problems of Life and Mind* is drawing to a close. These two have been my chief objects during this calamitous Summer, in which war and weather have continually pressed upon me the sense of public misfortune. I keep myself as busy as I can in my solitude, so that I may not become imbecile and useless.

I am glad you like Theophrastus. He has most unexpectedly won great favour with the public, whom he certainly does not flatter, and they have been magnanimous enough to buy 6000 of his *Impressions*. This detail is worth telling you if it will please your ardent goodwill.

I think about the precious Walking-stick I should like you to have it again to keep

as a memorial, if that would accord with your feeling. I have a great shrinking from the possibility that when I die relics may fall into the hands of those who do not care for them. Many small things I mean to have buried with me, and I think burning is better than leaving consecrated trifles to careless minds—I mean innocently careless from want of the needful initiation.

Please offer my loving remembrances to Mrs. Menzies, and believe me always, dear, full of grateful, affectionate memories—the record of all your goodness to me whom you have honoured with the name of Mother.

I am glad to be in a position to add, through the kindness of an old friend, a copy of Miss Richardson's "Character" of my mother, which was sent after seeing a specimen of my mother's handwriting. In spite of Mrs. Lewes's scepticism, I do not believe that Miss Richardson had ever heard of my mother before. This lady told character from handwriting for a small fee, which she handed to a charity in Ireland. I may add that this character, which is so contradictory, and which is yet so exactly like my mother, led to a long friendship between her and Miss Richardson. R. S.

Character of Elma Stuart given from handwriting, March 1866, *by Miss Richardson.*

This writing expresses talent, capability, an active and restless versatility of mind—an affectionate, enthusiastic, and imaginative nature: emotional, eager, ardent, hasty, exacting, jealous, tender yet also proud, positive, wilful, obstinate and provoking at times: fitful and changeable in mood, alternating in spirits, and though constant and true in heart and affection when once she admires, loves, and trusts, yet her pride is difficult and uncompromising, her independence, courage, and self-esteem lofty, stiff and unbending: and she resents and resists control, injustice, and oppression: is bitterly indignant, passionately angry, and fluently eloquent in description. There is much depth of feeling, quick grasp of thought, power to appreciate and understand character and motion, and much knowledge of the human heart. There is an artist's fondness for truth, beauty, and reality—a too vivid realization, and too keen a sense of joy and sorrow: much taste for literary pursuits, talent for description and composition: a little self-importance and unconscious egotism may mingle in all, yet the writer is generous and sympathetic, accomplished in mind and taste, agreeable in conversation, lively yet serious: earnest yet witty and playful, definite and close, yet liberal, and usefully, impulsively, and frankly benevolent.

P.S.—Miss Richardson feels much interested in this writing and would be glad to hear as to the *truth* of her sketch. She observes much artistic

talent and critical perception, yet some Utopian views, opinions, and theories. There is an independence and force of mind, courage, spirit, and resolution, with self-assertion yet self-denial — altogether a very full character, difficult to describe in all points.

THE HEIGHTS, WITLEY, NR. GODALMING,
Oct. 14, '79.

DEAREST ELMA—I bless you for the good deed you have done to poor à Beckett. The great blessing to you is the sense that you have saved him from extra suffering, but I add my tiny blessing as one dewdrop on the heavenly rose. You are contented to have renounced coming to London for the sake of making another's burthen lighter, so I too will be contented. I am constantly feeling that the worst of all privation is not the privation of joy but of ardent sympathy —the finding one's heart dry up, so that one has to act by rule without the tide of love to carry one. Clearly that is not your trouble, and so I can think of you with comfort notwithstanding the several hardships which have newly accumulated in your

life—the prospect of further separation from dear Mrs. Menzies not the least. But I am learning to encourage the hopefulness (for my friends) of which my Husband always set me the example. He never was tempted to forecast the fashion of uncertain ills, and liked to keep in mind that the year brings in its hand much unexpected good as well as ill to us mortals. Something may happen in your lot before next year is out that may make present despondency appear a sad waste of soul. If the southern climate has a benignant effect on your dear body, life will be comparatively easy to you. I should think that you will like San Remo better than Nice, which always seemed to me a gossiping, worldly, fashionable treadmill, in spite of the glorious Nature around it. Florence is an eminently dangerous place for delicate people—arctic winds up one street and the Tropics in another. You must wait till March is over before you think of going there.

I am very thankful to you for what you say about the *stick* and other relics. I

should trust to your cherishing care of what belonged to His memory.

My health is wonderfully better, and, by dint of being better taken note of *medically*, I am really stronger than I was eighteen months ago. I return to town on the 30th.

It is not surprising but it is very satisfactory that your neighbours are affectionately sorry to part with you. Alas, I am cowardly for you when I think of your quitting your pretty home which you have been so long decking according to your taste. Ugly London seems something of a Dante limbo, a preliminary circle of the Inferno, by comparison with the lovable smallness of a pretty French town. London is less gossipy, that is its one superiority.

I see your handwriting has all its old firmness, which makes me imagine you without rheumatic torment—at least in the arms. Please tell Mrs. Menzies and Roly that their loving remembrance is among my comforts—what love is not? but especially the love of creatures themselves so lovable.

Bless you, dear, once more, and think of

me always as your faithfully and gratefully affectionate mother

M. E. L.

There is a good student in view for the G. H. L. Studentship, but some of the applications in answer to the advertisement were incredibly silly and presumptuous. But the real aspirants in physiology are so rare that every physiologist knows them all. It is the science least adequately studied in England.

My servants are proud and pleased to be remembered by you.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Dec. 24, '79.

DEAREST ELMA—I have just finished reading your letter, and I cannot be wise enough to defer answering you till I have had time to reflect on the deeply-moving things it tells me of—I yearn too much to let you know that I feel with you. Words are feeble things without strong faith to receive them, but you are full, too full, of faith in me, and always care for my words more than they deserve.

It is the bodily pain that afflicts me most for you, and I am as impatient as you are with the robust and smiling preachers of patience. Such people think their talk virtuous, when the real virtue one should strive after is to understand and tenderly tolerate the sufferer's impatience. But you have one angel-friend who knows all the secrets of loving compassion. I comfort my mind with thinking that you have found comfortable rooms and a comfortable host. Otherwise, this cold time in Florence would make one think of Dante's frozen tears. We were one spring at the Victoria Hotel on the Arno, so that I can imagine your view—just as I can imagine your beds and pillows. The pillows were the worse torture. They always produced a neck-ache, which remains a part of Italian travel for me along with glorious campanili and awful apses with Christ sitting in judgment.

What shall I say about that other sore affliction? I can say nothing wiser than what you have yourself said. You have thought as well as felt all round the subject,

and what seems to be your strongest instinct seems to me also to be the right guidance. I mean, that you should express no discontent, use no remonstrance. He came to see me, and was exactly as he used to be—kissed me and told me quite boyishly about his examination difficulties. The change towards *you* remains a mystery to me in spite of what you suggest as a cause for it. It is hard, very hard, and I fear I should not be equal to the heroism which you have hitherto shown in not appearing to notice the difference. But if you were able to go on with the same resolve, I should venerate your self-control, and I think no other conduct would promise so good an issue.

And now I will obey your command to tell you something about myself. I am very well, in spite of the weather. Indeed, I feel stronger than I have felt for the last two years, my country doctor having got me into a reformed condition before I left the country. I see some friends now, and they are all very good to me. I occupy myself constantly, and find the time too

short for all I have to do. The Dr. Roy who was elected to the Studentship is believed to be the most promising of our advanced physiologists in the generation that has its best days yet to come. This is a great satisfaction to me—and the Studentship altogether is what I know that my Husband would have rejoiced in.

The last volume (500 pp.) of *Problems of Life and Mind* has lately been published, and with that I have finished what I had set myself as my year's work.

With regard to the Bust, dear, which your lovely and noble feeling has impelled you to exert yourself about—I think you would prefer that I should tell you the exact truth. Any portrait or bust of Him that others considered good I should be glad to have placed in any public institution. But for *myself* I would rather have neither portrait nor bust. My inward representation even of comparatively indifferent faces is so vivid as to make portraits of them unsatisfactory to me. And I am bitterly repenting now that I

was led into buying Mayall's enlarged copy of the photograph you mention. It is smoothed down and altered, and each time I look at it I feel its unlikeness more. *Himself as he was* is what I see inwardly, and I am afraid of outward images lest they should corrupt the inward. It is painful to me to write this after all the generous effort you have given to the subject, but it would be a sort of treachery not to tell you that it would be repugnant to me to have the bust and that I could not *myself* present it to any public institution. Perhaps you will think this an almost blameworthy strangeness in me. But it is unalterable.

Certainly I look at the Savonarola and Dante sometimes and think of you in consequence, but I think of you much oftener than I look at them. You have been very often in my mind, but I have been indulging in too hopeful visions about you, seeing you almost well on the Riviera! Miss Simcox was here last week and was inquiring very feelingly about you. She has been elected a member of the London School Board, and

is much mellowed by a sense of increasing usefulness and by the respect justly awarded to her.

I am so glad to think of your having a professional "rubber." I have heard much of good results from that treatment. Please let me know of any decided change in your condition, if it is not a burthen to you to write. I have so many letters of business or politeness to write now—things which used to be done for me—that I am disposed to be greedy of receiving and chary of giving in this way.

Please ask Mrs. Menzies to accept my best—my most respectful love—the tribute my heart gives to her for her goodness, and believe me always, dear, your tenderly sympathizing and gratefully loving Friend,

M. E. L.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK,
Feb. 7, '80.

DEAREST ELMA—Roland came the other day, when unfortunately I had not returned from my drive. However, Brett says he promised to come again, and I hope it will be after 4.30, which is the beginning of my time for receiving visitors. He left me the beautiful letter-weight, which, with all my gratitude to you for your sweet lovingkindness, is rather a weight on my heart, because your affection is more than my share without any material signs of it—and you have so many creatures who draw at your heart- and purse-strings.

I am greatly comforted on your behalf by what you tell me about Roland, and I let myself hope that your new ease of mind will be good for you medicinally, since the wise doctors (if there are any such in the matter of curatives) say that rheumatic gout is highly dependent on the presence or absence of anxiety. His sweet face and manners obliged me to believe that there could be no want of tenderness—that the

fountain was there, whatever causes might hem it in for a while.

For two things I thank you as an exceptionally considerate friend—for fencing me off from people who "want to be introduced," and for saying that I need not answer your letters. It would have been a denial of myself not to answer this last, but I will trust to your general understanding that I desire to know about you and to hear from you though I do not say so by letter. For as I have no one now to write business letters and notes of *politesse*, I find my time much drawn upon by these details of social duty, at which I grumble the more, perhaps, because I am not easy unless they are immediately fulfilled.

I shall hear from Roland all about your health, and whether you think it wise to stay in that dubiously sanitary Florence. I hope he will tell me that you have been having sunshine, while we here have been having Egyptian darkness—a general gloom which seems to belong to Irish want and the Afghan war and the increase of European

armaments. The air seems to be in mourning.

But I have kept very well all through the dismal weather, and have had no worse ailment than an occasional congestion of liver. One feels a little ashamed of being free from pain when one is doing nothing for those who have to bear it. But it is good to know that there is some ease in this hard world.

Please ask Mrs. Menzies to accept my love, and believe me, dear, your faithfully affectionate M. E. L.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
Mar. 28, '80.

I meant to see you yesterday, dear Elma, but a visitor came and hindered me. To-morrow I hope to carry out my purpose, and pray understand that if you do not see me, it is because my time has been used up by some one else. I meant to *taquiner* you for wasting your substance on *my* riotous living—ambrosial cake for my palate, and

slippers warm as kittens for my feet.—*A rivederci,* M. E. L.

THE PRIORY, 21 NORTH BANK, REGENT'S PARK,
April 23, '80.

DEAR-GOOD-NAUGHTY ELMA—What can I say of the 6 beautiful handkerchiefs but that they are ten times too nice for me?—I will not repeat the ungracious (seemingly ungracious) lecture I gave you the other day. I will only beseech you not to imagine me ungrateful for any love or sign of love. The pains of my friends—the pains they take to sweeten my life—are really "registered where every day I turn the leaf to read them." Try to understand what I meant, and do not let me have the grief of thinking that in wishing you to serve me only through serving others, I appeared to you to be repelling your affection.

Why should you compel yourself to cultivate ——'s society in order to hear of me, since I am as likely to write to you as to her? And I hope to see you again before I go away. What I would ask of you is,

whether your love and trust in me will suffice to satisfy you that, when I act in a way which is thoroughly unexpected there are reasons which justify my action, though the reasons may not be evident to you.

Keep getting better till I see you, and believe in me as always your faithfully affectionate M. E. L.

HOTEL VOUILLEMONT, PARIS,
11 *May*, 1880.

MY DEAR MRS. STUART—I am sure you will understand that my delay in answering your very cordial letter, dated more than a week ago, has not arisen from any want of appreciation of the beautiful thought that prompted you to write it. But the great event that has happened in my life seems to have taken away from me all power of doing, or thinking of, anything except how marvellously blessed is my lot—to be united for life with her who has for so long been my ideal. It is almost too great happiness to

have got the best. Knowing as I partly do the strong feeling you have towards her, I the more feel your expression of confidence in thinking of her as at rest in my care. The great object of my life now will be to justify her trust, and to fulfil worthily the high calling which I have undertaken. We were married, as you know, last Thursday, and have had a delicious six days' happiness. From here we go to Italy by the Cornice road, and expect to be back in England in 2 or 3 months' time, when I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you again and of becoming better acquainted with you. It will be a great pleasure to learn that you are free from the pain to which I am grieved to hear you have been so long a martyr. She sends you a particular message of love, and desires me to say that her happiness would be greater if she could think of you as free from suffering.—Believe me, very sincerely yours,

J. W. Cross.

LYONS,
May 18, 1880.

DEAREST ELMA—We are pausing here for a day, and welcome rain is falling to lay the dust, so that I feel at leisure to write you a little word about ourselves, as you desired me to do. Telling you that I am wonderfully well and able to take a great deal of exercise without fatigue makes me think sadly of the contrast this report makes with your poor encased limbs and patient endurance of weary nights and days. Any better account of yourself that you could send me to the Poste Restante, Milan, within the next ten days would be most gladly received. But if you have no good news to tell me, and if writing is a weariness, leave me in silence.—We have changed our projected route a little, and are going to-morrow to Grenoble, whence we shall make the expedition to the Grande Chartreuse. After that we shall go under or over the Mont Cenis to Milan, keeping in northern Italy. I have never found June too hot for enjoyment in that region. Our

journeying has been blessed with unbroken sunshine, and we are glad of this one grey rainy morning. Last evening we sat watching the sheet-lightning illuminating half the sky. One is inclined in these exceptional periods of life—these rests from daily occupation—to watch all we can see of what Nature is doing, and our journey through France has filled us with pictures of buttercupped meadows, long avenues of poplars, and towns lying warm in the sunshine. How well you know all these things! I found many changes in the Musée du Luxembourg since I last saw the pictures there, but I made some pleasant new acquaintances among the painters of French peasant life. The French, I think, succeed better in giving the true aspect of their common people, than our painters succeed in the same *genre*. Whom have we to pair with Jules Breton? But this time I have been most delighted with tiny pictures, perfect in finish, by Feyen.

I wonder whether you are beginning to sleep better, so that your head is less tired,

and you are better able to amuse the long hours. Give my love to the guardian angel Mrs. Menzies, and think of me always as one whose deepening experiences at least make her more tender towards all suffering, more glad of all joy for those whose lot has been brought near to her.—Believe me, dear, yours always lovingly,

M. A. Cross.

Innspruck,
June 27, 1880.

Dearest Elma—Your intreaty for a letter was not forgotten, but it has been impossible for me to fulfil it, for nearly a fortnight ago, at Venice, Mr. Cross had an attack of illness, due chiefly to the influences of the climate and to the lack of muscular exercise which the allurements of the gondola bring with them. Since we left Venice we have been each day slowly travelling upward to this region, and we shall make this a halting-place for a day or two.

I was much consoled about you by your

last letter which gave a really hopeful account of your health, and it was very good of you to make the exertion of writing it. What a joyful day it will be when you can rise unfettered and go about once more with your old activity! "*In Fides, Salus*," a good Italian said to me, having first asked me if I were a Catholic, and on my answering "No," saying that what he was thinking of would be of no use—until I pressed him to tell it me because I was interested in all Catholic doctrine. And I accept the doctrine he commended to me, though in what he would regard as a non-natural sense. It is a doctrine good for you too in my sense.

Mr. Cross is still a little more delicate than is usual with him, but *en revanche* I am quite miraculously strong and equal to the little extra calls upon me.

We shall be moving about with rather uncertain halting-places for the next ten days and more, so that I must go without news of you till we have arrived in England.

Meanwhile, go on getting well, and believe

in the constant affection of your now many-a-year-old friend, M. A. Cross.

Wildbad (in the borders of the Black Forest),
July 11, '80.

Dearest Elma—We have been for the last few days enjoying this place, and the fact that its baths are held marvellously efficacious in cases of rheumatism has made me think especially of you. I am wondering whether you have ever included it in your projects of travel. But still more I am wishing that I could know whether the relief you had felt when you last wrote to me has continued. If you could send a note—a bulletin about yourself—to Charles, he would forward it to me on the earliest possibility. I am almost afraid that you may have moved from Holland Road, for I think you said that Mrs. Menzies was only to remain in town till the end of June. In any case, if you could send news of yourself to Charles, he would be the surest medium for me to receive it in the uncertainty of our route homewards.

This is a very quiet bathing-place in the usual green valley sheltered by vast pine-forests, which cover hill and mountain and show their grand stems in the foreground. All the commodities of life are provided in abundance. The walks are inexhaustible, and there is a magnificent drive to Baden, which can be reached in seven hours (including time for the *Mittagsessen* and rest). The only hideous things here are the churches, and the ugliest of the three stares at us opposite our sitting-room window. One sees many suffering people here, and it is not a resort of fashion, like Baden or Wiesbaden. We have taken it simply as a quiet resting-place in the long inevitable journey across Germany, and we both find the air beneficent. But we are happily not invalids. Mr. Cross is well again and I am still without any ailment, able to take long walks, and to read aloud for any length of day-time.

Perhaps I am telling you what you already know, but I must mention that the baths here are said to have " a great amount

of electricity" in them—whatever may be the scientific value of that statement. And there is a Dr. Burckhardt here who has a good reputation as a physician. It is not yet decided whether we shall leave to-morrow or stay a few days longer, the decision depending on the possibility of our keeping our present rooms. When we go we shall drive to Baden, and so get a relief from railway journeying.

My poor long-suffering one, I wish I could know that you are able to sit up and have your dear legs free from bondage. If Mrs. Menzies is still with you, pray offer her my love and best wishes, and Roland too—ask him still to remember me affectionately as he has been used to do, I think, seeing that he has always behaved so prettily to me.—Always your faithful Friend,

MARY ANN CROSS.

THE HEIGHTS, WITLEY, NR. GODALMING,
Aug. 18, '80.

DEAREST ELMA — I am thoroughly astonished, and can hardly believe, that I have not written to you since I came home. I wish that I could always remember to note in my Diary the letters I write each day, so that I might not take the intention to write for the fact of having written.

Yes! we got home in all prosperity on the 26th, and since then we have been staying at Sevenoaks with one of my husband's married sisters. We returned home again only last night, so that your letter has been lying for some days unopened.

I am most glad (for his sake and yours) to hear of Roly's tenderness to you. I know that this must be your chief heart-comfort. But I am somewhat disappointed that you do not give a decided report of improvement in your health. The excursion in the bath-chair is all the ground you give me for a happy inference about you, poor dear.

Mr. Cross improves every day in health and strength, and he has especially benefited by the grand exercise of lawn tennis which he has been having at his brother-in-law's. We have two more family visits to pay, and then we shall be occupied with our house affairs.

Forgive me that I send you only a brief scribbling letter, which I am finishing as fast as I can, in order to send it to the post to-day, instead of letting you imagine me neglectful for another 24 hours.

My best regards to the lady who is acting as your guardian angel.—Always thy faithfully affectionate

M. A. Cross.

The Heights, Witley, Nr. Godalming,
Sep. 14, '80.

Dearest Elma—I trust that the change announced in your letter is both for good and because of good. You would have had a scribble from me again long ago if we had not been paying visits to friends in Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire, during which my

time and strength were quite absorbed by immediate calls on them.

Do you know that your angelic friend Mrs. Menzies was so good as to write me a letter telling about you, soon after I wrote last? It was very sweet of her to do it, and her account of you had its sweetness too, though it convinced me of what I had before suspected, namely, that you make too light of your sufferings in your reports to me. My poor, poor dear—what must it be to have at once acute pain and sleeplessness! And to be imprisoned and shackled and want strength even to be amused. But words seem all presumptuous and hard when they come from those at ease to those who are being tortured.

The words you, in your lovingness, like best to hear are such as tell you of well-being in the lot of others. We are just now living in an oasis of peace and content. My (Scotch) husband looks better and feels stronger every day, and acts more and more completely as my guardian angel. I allow your triumph at my having committed my

life to a Scotchman, but did I ever say that the *best* Scotch were not better than the best English? I believe they are, as a general rule, but one has one's reserves for those best English that happen to have been best *to oneself.*

My soul is often too full of past and present together, and seems hardly strong enough for the double weight, but no woman could be helped more than I am.

I cannot help imagining that the mere change from Ben Rhydding must be some relief to you, but you may have said something about it which I have not thoroughly read, for I gave your letter to Mr. Cross and he has carried it away in his pocket— which admonishes me that I may as well keep my letter open till he comes back from town, since I have not your address before me.

Wednesday Mg. — I see that you only say "Thank God" àpropos of your quitting Ben Rhydding. But the ability to make a change is something for me to be glad of on your behalf. Matlock is a lovely place

—a fond old remembrance of mine from days when I used to travel with my Father. Poor Savage, the novelist, who was many many years racked with rheumatism, said he hated every place in turn, because no place made him well. But it is not so with you, I think—at least I can't infer that it is from your being tired of Ben Rhydding, for I have always been sure that I should think it an outer circle of the Inferno.

Bless you, dear, for all your goodness. I look forward to the time when you will be able to say "I am well"—but I cannot believe, as Æneas pretended, "Perhaps even these days will be a joy to you to look back upon." No—we can never be glad that you had all this torture, but oh, how glad, when it shall have had an end!

Write to me news of yourself.—Your affectionate M. A. C.

THE HEIGHTS, WITLEY, NR. GODALMING,
13 *Oct.* 1880.

DEAREST ELMA—I trust that you received the letter I sent to your Matlock address. I have been putting off writing to you because I have been rather ill and did not want you to know it. But now, I hunger to have news of you and to know whether you have found at Malvern the conditions you need. Dear Mrs. Menzies wrote to me with a kind present of game, and *she* told me that you had been disgusted with Matlock. I trust you have found a doctor at Malvern who is as little as possible of a charlatan. Do, dear, return good for anything you may esteem evil in me by sending me a full, true, and particular account of yourself.

And think of me as if I were under the charge of angels, for I have more tenderness given to me than could belong to *one* angel. It takes a strong man to be perfectly tender —a strong man who has known what it is to suffer.

We shall both see the outside of your very 'kenspeckle' letter with expectant

interest. I am not strong yet and am contemptibly tired with any little exertion, so I wind up my shabby note without waiting to see if I can mend it by additions.—Thine, dear, always,

M. A. Cross.

Mr. Cross desires me to offer his best regards.

The Heights, Witley, Nr. Godalming,
Nov. 15, '80.

Dearest Elma—We rejoiced over your dear cheerful letter, but we rejoiced with trembling, and shall long to hear again that we may know if the blessed relief continues. Mr. Cross years ago had an illness (rheumatic fever) which makes him understand your sufferings, and he enters with much sympathy into the promise of relief for you. The beautiful kerchief with its soothing colour will be a memorial to me of the good news which accompanied it, and I shall be very fond of wearing it. I think this must be somewhere about the hundredth gift from your heart and hand,

and I can scarcely turn to any sort of employment without seeing or using something that reminds me of you.

My health is, we hope, steadily improving, but I have some way uphill to go before I reach my midsummer weight and strength. Mr. Cross has had to fash himself about the removal of books and other less important furniture to 4 Cheyne Walk for the last three or four days, and he is gone on the same errand again to-day. We hope to be settled in that new town home by the end of the month. I am obliged to be passive and useless, for I am not allowed to incur fatigue and draughts. My small sufferings have made me think the more of your great, great suffering. The loss of the pretty hair would seem to me more of a misfortune for you if I did not imagine how comfortable you must feel without its golden lengths.[1] I have all my life wished it were possible for me

[1] My mother had the most wonderful head of hair—pure gold in colour; but having once known the comfort of short hair, she would never allow it to grow again, in spite of the entreaties of her friends.

to have my hair cut short that I might wash it every day. But short hair is held by the many to be the worst heresy in a woman who has not had it ordered by the doctor. Thus you are privileged to go with a crop.

If Mrs. Menzies is still with you, please give my love to her. A letter from her about you would be much prized by me.

And to the gallant young soldier too I would send my affectionate regards if they had not to travel beyond your elbow while you read this page.—Always, dear, your faithfully loving

M. A. Cross.

4 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, S.W.
Dec. 11, 1880.

Dearest Elma—Your letter received this morning has found me in trouble, Mr. Cross having been ill for the last few days (since Monday evening) with what the doctor declares to be a bilious attack, and he is still in a state of suffering, which causes me much affliction. But after

this, let me say that I find some comfort in thinking of your steady improvement and continued warrant for confidence in your new doctor.

With regard to the chief subject of your letter, I judge somewhat differently from you. Years ago an intimate friend of mine, then a young woman of little more than thirty, took the step on which Mrs. Menzies has resolved. She had very ardent friendships with other women who remained Protestant and plus-quam-Protestant, but no disruption of such friendships occurred in consequence of her becoming a Catholic. After reading Mrs. Menzies' letter I wonder that your acute penetration and habit of reflection are so beclouded by your emotion (with which I sympathize to a certain extent) that you can think this a case for reasoning and remonstrance. How can you by reasoning overturn what is not based on reasoning but on a sense of need which Catholicism seems to supply? I for my part would not venture to thrust my mind on hers as a sort of omniscient dictatress,

when in fact I am very ignorant of the inward springs which determine her action. That she has not spoken to you of her intention until now is no proof that it has not been long ripening, and in fact I see in her letter the expression of a long-felt dissatisfaction and yearning—a thirst which has found the longed-for water. To insist on ideas or external reasons in opposition to such deeply-felt inclinations is no more effective than the swallowing of a paper prescription. Remember, dear, that the reason why societies change slowly is, because individual men and women cannot have their natures changed by doctrine and can only be wrought on by little and little. You are as capable as any one of being patient towards inalterable differences of nature in your friends, and though I understand the painful shock you have felt from this sudden revelation, I feel sure that you will presently have a clear vision of the unfitness manifested by your sweet friend's nature for "voyaging in strange seas of thought" and choosing for herself from

among philosophical doctrines. There is so much goodness in her that she will have affinity only for the goodness in Catholicism, and what strikes you as contradiction and folly will have no such perturbing effect on her thought. You speak of "Protestant sects" as if their ideas were superior to Catholicism, but surely you would have been equally pained if she had united herself with any fanatical Protestant sect which might easily have prompted some line of action inconsistent with *practical* attachment to you. I do not foresee that her actual change will have the effect of dividing her from you, *if* you will only, out of reverence for that sanctuary of inmost feeling which the closest union must leave free from intrusion—if, I say, you will only out of such reverence abstain from dictation, remonstrance, or worrying argument which can find no corresponding substance to be argumentatively affected.

I am writing so hurriedly, having a load of anxiety on my mind, that I cannot make my meaning fully intelligible. But I have

said enough to show you that I cannot make an appointment with Mrs. Menzies in order to speak with her persuasively or dissuasively. But will you tell her that I shall be very glad to see her pretty face if she will call on me any day (except Saturday) after 4.30.

Pardon me, dear, if, in my preoccupation of mind, I have used any word that is at all painful to you. That would be the opposite of my wish.

Thanks for the beautiful Photo. If I were you I would never let my hair grow again.—Yours ever affectionately,

M. A. Cross.

2 *hours later.*—Mr. Cross is much relieved, and I am more cheerful.

4 Cheyne Walk, Chelsea, S.W.
Dec. 18, '80.

Dearest Elma—I am sorry that we were out yesterday when your good angel Mrs. Menzies called, but I had the gladness of hearing, through Brett, that you had actually got on your feet again! That is the best of all testimonies to the treatment of your new doctor. *Magnificat anima mea!* —This morning I have received Roly's handsome Photo. He is a fine fellow, and I cannot help auguring well for his future, though sceptically disposed towards auguries of all kinds with regard to our mixed human nature with its mixed environment.

Among the many blunders I have committed in the mental and physical chaos of this last fortnight is the throwing away of your envelope inscribed with Mrs. Menzies' address. I am therefore obliged to beg that when you next write to her—and I imagine you doing so very often—you will express for me my regret that she

should have had the trouble of coming so far as this place in vain. But I find it impossible to make appointments which fetter me for particular days and hours, and I must trust to the generosity of my friends in the matter of visits.

I make an *action de grâce* to your new doctor for doing you so much good.—Always, dear, your loving friend,

M. A. Cross.

There was a passage over which we laughed (sympathetically) in your last letter. I leave you to guess which it was.

And so closes this correspondence, for on the 22nd of December—only four days later—George Eliot died. As may be imagined, the grief to my mother was unspeakable and the sense of loss well-nigh unbearable. The one ray of comfort at this most sad time was the presence of our dear cousin, Mrs. Stewart-Menzies (the "guardian angel" of the letters), who, immediately on hearing the sad news, took a long journey so as to be near my mother, to comfort her and to try to cheer her by her loving presence—it was one more instance of my cousin's most beautiful unselfishness. And twenty-three years later she gave another proof of the profoundness of

her love and devotion, by taking the long journey, in the depth of winter, from Scotland, in order to stand beside my beloved mother's grave, when her ashes were laid in Highgate Cemetery beside those of George Eliot. R. S.

APPENDIX

Among the many autographs given by Mr. Lewes to my Mother the following are some of the most interesting.

APPENDIX

HAWORTH, *Novb. 23rd*, 1850.

MY DEAR SIR—I am glad to hear that Miss Martineau's little story in the *Leader* touched you and made you cry. I thought it a sample of *real* suffering; a case piteous, cureless, voiceless. It is to be feared there are many such. Life—seen in some phases—is a very dreary thing. I used to think human destinies were nearly equal, but the older I grow—the weaker becomes my hold on this doctrine; it is fast slipping from me.

While I decline your offer of a fresh supply of books, believe, at the same time, that I am grateful for it.

You ask whether I am "distilling life and thought in any new shape." Don't goad me with such questions, my dear Sir. Let it suffice to answer that I am on the worst terms with myself—alternating between a lively indignation and a brooding contempt, and that if anybody would take out a patent for a new invention enabling distressed authors to command their mood and to compel to obedience their refractory faculties—I should

regard that individual as the first benefactor of his race.

As to "recent changes of scene" I enjoyed them much at the time: they ought to do me good; my health they certainly benefited, and if their mental effect is otherwise than it ought to be—the fault is doubtless mine.

I have one pleasing duty to perform which I must not forget ere I conclude this letter—that is to congratulate you and all others whom it may concern on the pious disposition evinced by the *Leader* to walk bodily back to the True Fold. There is something promising and touching in the tone you have lately assumed—a something which will kindle the glow of holy expectation in the heart of Cardinal Archbishop Wiseman when his chaplain reads to him your lucubrations. You ask me to write to your "Open Council." I couldn't presume to do such a thing—but in another year perhaps your columns will be consecrated by contributions from the Cardinal and letters from Father John Henry Newman.

Most moving is that apostolic and evangelic declaration of the Archbishop of Westminster that he wants nothing of his See but the back courts and dark alleys and all the human poverty and misery with which they teem. There is nothing jesuitical in this, nothing whatever of the wolf-in-sheep's-clothing—and the most carping heretic will not dare to moot the question—whether—if all Holy Church seeks be the good of the poor—she could

not look after this quite as well in a curate's plain clothes as in a cardinal's robes and hat—whether the blaze and pomp of her hierarchy is absolutely necessary to the instruction of ignorance and the relief of destitution.

Wishing you and Mr. Thornton Hunt and all of you much facility of speech in your first experiment in auricular confession, and a very full absolution from your awful heresies, together with no heavier penance than the gravity of the case (which will be pretty stringent) shall seem absolutely to demand.—I am, yours sincerely,

C. Brontë.

G. H. Lewes, Esq.

Pisa, *July* 27, 1820.

My dear Keats—I hear with great pain the dangerous accident that you have undergone, & Mr. Gisborne who gives me the account of it, adds that you continue to wear a consumptive appearance. This consumption is a disease particularly fond of people who write such good verses as you have done, and with the assistance of an English winter it can often indulge its selection;—I do not think that young and amiable poets are at all bound to gratify its taste; they have entered into no bond with the Muses to that effect. But seriously (for I am joking on what I am very anxious about) I think you would do well to pass the winter after so tremendous an accident, in Italy, & (if you think it as necessary as I do) so long as you could [find?] Pisa or its neighbourhood agreeable to you, Mrs. Shelley unites

with myself in urging the request, that you would take up your residence with us. You might come by sea to Leghorn (France is not worth seeing, & the sea air is particularly good for weak lungs), which is within a few miles of us. You ought at all events to see Italy, & your health, which I suggest as a motive, might be an excuse to you. I spare declamation about the statues & the paintings & the ruins—& what is a greater piece of forbearance—about the mountains the Streams & the fields, the colours of the sky, & the sky itself.

I have lately read your *Endymion* again & ever with a new sense of the treasures of poetry it contains, though treasures poured forth with indistinct profusion. This, people in general will not endure, and that is the cause of the comparatively few copies which have been sold. I feel persuaded that you are capable of the greatest things, so you but will.

I always tell Ollier to send you copies of my books—*Prometheus Unbound* I imagine you will receive nearly at the same time with this letter. The *Cenci* I hope you have already received—it was studiously composed in a different style "below the *good* how far? but far above the *great.*" In poetry *I* have sought to avoid system & mannerism; I wish those who excel me in genius, would pursue the same plan.

Whether you remain in England, or journey to Italy,—believe that you carry with you my anxious wishes for your health, happiness, & success, wherever

you are or whatever you undertake—& that I am yours sincerely, P. B. SHELLEY.

(Addressed) JOHN KEATS, Esqr.
(to the care of Leigh Hunt, Esqr.)
Examiner Office
Catharine Street
Strand
London.

Angleterre.

KNEBWORTH, 13 *June* 1874.

MY DEAR LEWES—Your kind & charming letter was thrice welcome. I hope that, before we leave England, we may both of us be able to pay you a visit, but my poor wife will not yet awhile be able to creep out of her shell here.

I wish I could give you a better report of her health.

If however you will tell me how to get to you from town, I think I shall very probably before long ask you to give me a day's hospitality at Redhill & there delight my soul with talk? neither of knightly nor of nightly deeds—but of all those things on heaven & earth which are dreamed of by your philosophy.

Your disbelief in the rumoured Browning marriage I rejoice to know—and indeed I feel that I ought not, by attending to it, to have given currency to a story which I myself have refused to credit—But . . . but—well, it distresses me that his numerous new acquaintances should regard as probable or actual, many doings & sayings of his,

which I should have once believed—more firmly than I do now—to be impossible. How well I appreciate the impatience with which you must listen to the folks who wish that Geo. Eliot "would only write novels"! If genius listened to such folks (whose advice must be one of the drawbacks of a great popularity) its work would be like that of the village painter in Canning's capital story of the Red Lion. His only idea of decorative variety was to paint little red lions for the small pannels because a big red lion was so effective in the large ones.

Your liking for the fables gives me more pleasure than anything else in connection with them. I see you mention the possibility of *riding* from Knebworth to Redhill. I should like that very much if it be possible. Can it really be done? I wd. prefer a long & a hard day's ride to an hour's rail, if there be any inn at Redhill where I cd. put up my horse—and if the distance be within a day's ride.—Ever, dear friends, yr. most affect.

LYTTON.

God

Im Innern ist ein Universum auch;
Daher der Völker löblicher Gebrauch
Dass jeglicher das Beste was er kennt,
Er Gott, ja seinen Gott benennt,
Im Himmel und Erden übergiebt,
In fürchtet, und wo möglich liebt.

GOETHE.

We also have an Universe within;
And hence the Nation's laudable practice
That what each man knows of the Best
He calls God, yea his God,
Gives into his hands Heaven & Earth,
Reverences him, & if possible loves him.

G. H. L. to Elma Stuart,
1 *Sepr.* 1874.

Lines by Elma Stuart on the Venus of Milo

O'er all the carvéd marbles thou art proudly Queen:
Nay—'mong all living beauty—peerless thou.
How sovran are thy mien of peace—of calmness
Inaccessible: and thy alluring sweetness—
How god-like is thy form. What wonder then
That Heine, overwhelmed with all his gathering woe
What time his years of "Mattress-grave" and torment had begun,
Sank at thy feet in tears? So in my wretchedness have I;
For thoughts of loss, too wild for words, surged in my heart—
I too was sick, life-weary—desolate—and turning
From the impuissant tenderness of human friends
To Thee—thou mystic Loveliness—my soul
Attained to strength and calm serene,
In contemplation rapt of thy enduring peace.

E. S., 1886.

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AND HOW CAN I KEEP SO?

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Eliot, George
Letters to Elma Stuart

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